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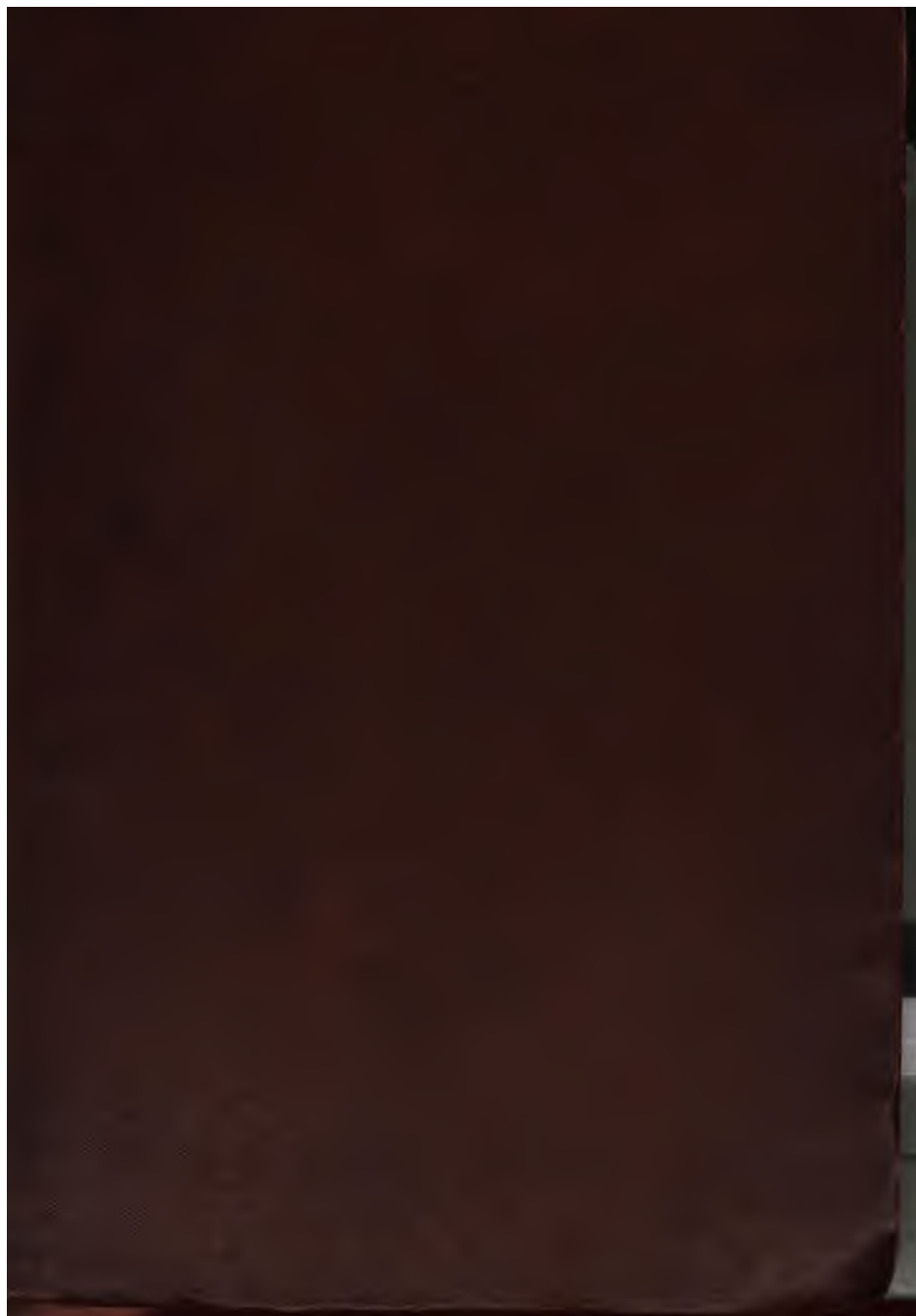
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ANSTER FAIR

ANSTER FAIR

BY

WILLIAM TENNANT, LL.D.

WITH MEMOIR AND NOTES



EDINBURGH
JOHN ROSS AND COMPANY

1871

PREFATORY NOTE.

IN "Anster Fair," the author had no other end in view than the creation of pure fun—innocent, aimless enjoyment, as its own end. We have ceased to consider this an unworthy motive, and only ask, is it well done?

The poem is unique in English Literature; and though its machinery is familiar enough, yet the structure and treatment are quite original. The sub-plot is kept in admirable proportion, and its evolution so depends on that of the main plot that there is nothing discordant in their relative development. The adjuncts, too, are appropriate and relevant; and the variety and life with which the action is hurried on keep the reader's interest unflagged till the end.

Though to some extent cast in a local mould, it is, nevertheless, so perfectly catholic, that it would suffer little depreciation by having its names changed to those of any locality in the Kingdom. That it has hitherto been little known beyond Scotland, is greatly owing to causes referred to in our memoir of the author—his own unobtrusive modesty, and literary isolation; and the luxurious growth of passionate and brilliant poetry in the midst of which it first appeared. Now, however, that the poetic excitement of the first half of the present century has subsided, and that the heavier matter which that ferment kept suspended has sunk to the bottom, this new edition of "Anster Fair" is launched with strong faith in its permanent buoyancy.

The text has been carefully collated with all the editions published by the Author, and a few slight grammatical oversights, and slips of measure, are corrected.

EDINBURGH, 1st December 1871.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE following poem is presented to the public with that diffidence and anxiety which every young author feels when the good or bad fate of his first production must check his rashness and vanity, or enliven his future efforts with the confidence arising from popular approbation.

The poem is written in stanzas of octave rhyme, or the *ottava rima* of the Italians, a measure said to be invented by Boccaccio, and after him employed by Tasso and Ariosto. From these writers it was transferred into English poetry by Fairfax, in his translation of "Jerusalem Delivered," but since his days, has been by our poets, perhaps, too little cultivated. The stanza of Fairfax is here shut with the Alexandrine of Spenser, that its close may be more full and sounding.

In a humorous poem, partly descriptive of Scottish manners, it was impossible to avoid using Scottish words. These, however, will, it is hoped, be found not too many. Some old English words are likewise admitted.

The transactions of ANSTER FAIR may be supposed to have taken place during the reign of James V.—a monarch whom tradition reports to have had many gamesome rambles in Fife, and with whose liveliness and jollity of temper the merriment of the FAIR did not ill accord. Yet a scrupulous congruity with the modes of his times was not intended, and must not be expected. Ancient and modern manners are mixed and jumbled together, to heighten the humour, or variegate the description.

EDINBURGH, 5th May, 1812.

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MEMOIR OF
WILLIAM TENNANT.

THE antiquated little town of Anstruther, situated at the mouth of the Firth of Forth, on its Fife-shore, has within one generation, been the birth-place of three eminent men—Thomas Chalmers, William Tennant, and John Goodsir. There appears to have been nothing in the local circumstances or in the time, to account for the almost simultaneous appearance of this distinguished group, beyond what was the common condition of all similar burghs in Scotland, since parish and burgh schools were instituted all over the country. Apart from the influence of this beneficent and happily common boon to all, nothing could have been more spontaneous, and left to its natural growth, than the social and intellectual life of these out of the way little burghs that fringe the coast of Fife; yet they have contributed their fair quota of famous names to the annals of Scotland.

William Tennant, the second of the above group, was born on the 15th of May 1784, a year before the birth of David Wilkie at the Manse of Cults.* He was the second son of Alexander Tennant, a small Merchant and Farmer, in Anstruther, of which his

* These two sons of Fife are here associated, not on account of the nearness of their birth, but because their genius chose the same subject for its first and brightest manifestation, namely the Fairs of their respective birth-places.

father and grandfather were natives. His mother, Ann Watson was a native of the adjacent village of Cellardyke. Both his parents were persons of intelligence, rather above the average of people in their social position. Physically he was never robust, and though born without any defect, yet he lost the use of his limbs so early that he may be said never to have had it. In due time he was sent to the burgh school, where diligent application, and a special gift of acquiring languages, placed him at the head of his classes.

In the Scottish parish and burgh schools, the classics held an honoured place; the pupil who excelled in them being sure of the teacher's favour; and it was seldom that circumstances interposed a barrier to his being sent to the University. To have at least one of the family sent to College was an ambition which many Scottish parents in the very humblest circumstances cherished, and even gratified, and there could be no better testimony to our love of knowledge, than a record of the privations and hardships that have been overcome, both by students and parents, to attain this object of commendable ambition. It is to be feared, and regretted, that the sentiment is not on the increase.

Young Tennant's progress at school was so rapid, that, coupled with his lameness, it suggested to his parents the idea of making a teacher of him, a profession to which the physically maimed, but intellectually whole, were with true Scotch sagacity largely devoted, as a practical means of counterbalancing the unequal dealings of providence. Accordingly at the age of fifteen he was sent to St. Andrews University, where he made rapid progress in Greek and Latin, under the distinguished teachers who then held the chairs of those languages.

At the end of his second session it was found that his father's means were insufficient to enable him to complete his curriculum, and the idea of making

him a teacher had to be given up in the meantime. After remaining some time at home, in 1803 he was sent to Glasgow to act as clerk to his elder brother, then in business there as a corn factor. That the business was not a very prosperous one may be inferred from the fact that it was transferred to Anstruther in 1805, when both brothers returned to their native-place, William still acting as clerk and living at his father's house. He continued in this capacity till 1811, when a crisis occurred in his brother's affairs, and as the principal did not remain to bear the brunt of his embarrassments, poor William was seized in his stead. On its being found that no moral blame attached to him, he was acquitted; nevertheless the matter caused him great distress, and was the severest and almost the only disagreeable trial he had to encounter. With it ended his commercial career, which after all taught him some wholesome lessons, and perhaps saved him from mistakes in after life, unto which the studious are but too liable to fall.

During those eight years of uncongenial and unprofitable trafficking, he did not abandon his studies, but by unwearied application, during his leisure hours, he read such poets as Ariosto, Wieland, and Camoens, in the original, and also mastered the Hebrew Bible. Neither did he altogether forsake the Muses, with whom he first dallied at St. Andrews, for we find him in Glasgow before attaining his twentieth year, attempting at least to tune his harp to sing his enjoyment of the classics :—

“ Green are my days, and lone I dwell
Down in the windings of the dell :
There, all aloof from guilt and guile,
As in a blest Hesperian isle
I live, and peaceful, hear from far
The din of high ambition's war.”

In 1808 we again find him striking the poetic lyre

and as it enables us to judge of his progress in the divine art, besides letting us see that he had then the consciousness of having to pass through the crisis which terminated his commercial career, we quote the following stanzas.

- And yet a voice foreboding rings
Within the hollow of my heart :
" For adverse and for prosperous things,
Prepare thee to fulfil thy part.
- " In youthful virtue wrapt, be sure
Fair merit shall not miss its meed :
Thine adverse, others shall procure ;
Thy prosperous, from thyself proceed.
- " Then, till arrive thy ripper day,
Patient in trust be thine the part,
With Reason's rod and Wisdom's ray,
To chastise and illumine thy heart.
- " Heaven be thy confidence and hope ;
Learning, thy staff, whereon to lean,
As to distinctions honoured top
Thou aimest, through the crowd of men."

His first attempt in the humorous vein was the "Anster Concert," a purely local poem, of twenty-three stanzas, and no way above the average of such effusions. We do not learn when he commenced "Anster Fair," but we incline to think that the publication of Scott's "Lady of the Lake" in 1810 must have had a stimulating influence on his mind, though there is no further resemblance between the two poems than their containing the same number of Cantos, and having James V. for one of their leading characters. He was known to have been an admirer of Scott, and it may be presumed that it was from the notes to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," that he obtained the tradition regarding the transformation of Michael Scott. "Anster Fair" was completed in 1811, and, taking the introductory stanza to the sixth canto, as data, he wrote the first five cantos before his brother's

failure, for there can be no doubt that the despondency of that stanza is a reflection of the distress occasioned by that event. The first edition was published anonymously, and was printed for William Cockburn, Anstruther, by Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; the preface being dated Edinburgh, 5th May 1812. It soon came under the notice of Lord Woodhouslee, who was so struck with the genius it displayed, that he took immediate steps to find out the author's name; no doubt inferring from the unassuming preface, that youthful diffidence was the cause of its absence from the title-page. In August 1812, he wrote Mr Cockburn in terms that must have filled Tennant's heart with joy and gratitude.—

"SIR—I have lately read, with a very high degree of pleasure, a small poetical performance, which I observe bears your name as publisher on the title-page. The author of *Anster Fair* cannot long remain concealed. It contains, in my opinion, unequivocal marks of strong original genius; a vein of humour of an uncommon cast, united with a talent for natural description of the most vivid and characteristic species, and, above all, a true feeling of the sublime—forming altogether one of the most pleasing and singular combinations of the different powers of poetry that I have ever met with. Unless the author has very strong reasons for concealing his name, I must own that I should be much gratified by being informed of it. ALEX. FRASER TYTLER."

In the autumn of 1813, Tennant was appointed to the office of schoolmaster of Dunino, an inland parish halfway between St. Andrews and Anstruther. It does not appear to whose influence he owed this small but seasonable preferment; for though the salary and other emoluments did not exceed forty pounds a year, it was more than equal to his wants. The office too was congenial, and gave him access to the University Library at St. Andrews, while it afforded him leisure to prosecute his scholastic studies, and cultivate his literary tastes. His poetic reputation now procured him access to cultivated society, and he became specially intimate with Hugh Cleghorn, Esq., of Stravithie, a gentleman in his neighbourhood,

who, besides being an accomplished scholar, had seen a great deal of foreign service as an agent of the British Government. In 1814 he published a second edition of "Anster Fair," in which he introduced a new stanza,* and made some verbal corrections. It was on the publication of this edition that it was brought under the notice of Jeffrey, who reviewed it in the 47th number of "The Edinburgh" in the following terms :—

"We consider this volume, not only as eminently original, but as belonging to a class of composition hitherto but little known in the literature of this country—to that species, we mean, of gay or fantastic poetry which plays through the works of Pulci and Ariosto, and animates the compositions of many inferior writers both in Spain, and in Italy—which is equally removed from the vulgarity of mere burlesque or mock-heroic, and from the sarcasm and point and finesse of satirical pleasantry—which is extravagant rather than ridiculous, and displays only the vague and unbounded licence of a sportive and raised imagination, without the cold pungency of wit, or the practised sagacity of derision."

"The subject, which we do not think very fortunately chosen, is borrowed from some ancient legends, respecting the marriage choice of a fair lady, whose beauty is still celebrated in the ballads and traditions of Mr Tennant's native district, and whose hand, it seems, was held out as the reward of the victor in an ass race, and a match of running in sacks—a competition of bag-piping, and of story-telling. Upon this homely foundation Mr Tennant has erected a vast superstructure of description, and expended a great treasure of poetry. He has also engrafted upon it the airy and ticklish machinery of Shakespeare's, or rather of Wieland's Oberon—though he has given the less adventurous name of Puck to his ministering spirit, who, with the female fairy to whom he is wedded, patronises the victor in these successive contentions, and secures not only his success, but his acceptance with the devoted fair."

"The great charm of this singular composition consists, no doubt, in the profusion of images and groups which it thrusts upon the fancy, and the crowd and hurry and animation with which they are all jostled and driven along; but this, though a very rare merit in any modern production, is entitled perhaps to less distinction than the perpetual sallies and outbursts of a rich and poetical imagination, by which the homely themes on which the author is professedly employed are constantly ennobled or contrasted, and in which the ardour of a mind evidently fitted for higher tasks is somewhat capriciously expended. It is this frequent kindling of the diviner spirit—this tendency to rise above the trivial subjects among which he has chosen to disport himself, and this

* St. xix. of Canto Second.

power of connecting grand or beautiful conceptions with the representation of vulgar objects or ludicrous occurrences, that first recommended this poem to our notice, and still seem to us to entitle it to more general notoriety. The author is occupied, no doubt, in general, with low matters, and bent upon homely mirth, but his genius soars up every now and then in spite of him; and 'his delights—to use a quaint expression of Shakspeare—

' his delights
Are dolphin-like, and show their backs above
The element they move in.'"

To say that merited praise is generous, may not be strictly consistent, yet the credit of having supplied the struggling, and obscure craft of Tennant, with a friendly gale, can hardly be denied to the Æolus who held the blasts of criticism under his control. The closing paragraph is a curious estimate of the spirit in which criticism should be dispensed.

"Perhaps we have detained our English readers too long with our two tuneful countrymen,"—referring also to Hogg's 'Queen's Wake,' which was reviewed at the same time. "They have neither of them, we confess, the pathos and simplicity of Burns, or the energy and splendour of Scott, but they appear to be persons of promise; and, at all events, to be singly worth a whole cageful of ordinary songsters from the Colleges and cities of the south.* We leave them now to their fate, and if they do not turn out well, we engage to be more cautious in giving out words of good augury for the future."

Passing by, as inscrutable, the fate to which our tuneful countrymen were to be consigned, should they fail to justify by their future conduct the critic's "words of good augury," it would be difficult to point to a passage displaying worse taste towards "our English readers." But when we consider, that in this very number of *The Edinburgh "Waverley,"* "The Lord of the Isles," "The Queen's Wake," and "Anster Fair," were all under his critical dissection, for the first time, we cease to wonder at a slight display of arrogance on the part of the operator. The unintentional offence to the "persons of promise," if seen at all,

* It may raise a smile to think that this hit was meant for Byron

was overlooked, and in Tennant's case, as we shall afterwards see, Jeffrey was better than his word.

He continued his quiet course of study and teaching at Dunino till 1816, now and again diversified by a visit to Edinburgh, where he timidly mixed in its literary cotteries, whose "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*" served but to sharpen his relish for his cottage and his Homer. Here too, he added Arabic, Syriac, and Persian to the list of his linguistic acquirements. In 1816 he was promoted, chiefly through the influence of George Thomson, the friend and correspondent of Burns, to be parish teacher of Lasswade; that sweet classic village in which Scott spent the first few years of his married life, and where De Quincey lingered out the last sad years of his. He remained at Lasswade about the same time as at Dunino, and with as little to interrupt his quiet course of industrious study. While here he published the third edition of "*Anster Fair*," but with little or no alteration from the second. In 1819 he was elected by the trustees of Dollar Academy, to fill the position of teacher of Classical and Oriental languages in that institution. His position and emoluments were now greatly improved, and his surroundings were equally romantic and associated with classic memories as at Lasswade. He accordingly resolved to make Dollar his home, and in due time built himself a modest villa which he named *Devon-grove*, in front of which the "*Crystal Devon*" "*meandering flows*." To the west stretch the beautiful Ochil Hills which Scott celebrates in "*The Lord of the Isles*" as the back ground of his picture of the scene from *Bannockburn*; and along whose "*Hill foots*," as they are familiarly called, stretch the rich silvan domains once owned by the classic and adventurous "*William, Earle of Sterline*;" while quite at hand is the wildly situated, and historic *Castle Campbell*, with its "*Hill of Gloom*" and its streams of *Sorrow and Care*, combining

to form the *Dolour*. Looking eastward, as no doubt he often did, towards his native Anster, his eye would rest on the leafy fringe that marks the course of the Devon, where it works its waters through the "Devil's Mill," foams in the "Devil's Punch Bowl," clamours through the "Rumbling Brig," and tumbles over the "Caldron Linn." Poetic sympathy would also direct his thoughts to the little sequestered village of Kinneswood on the banks of Lochleven where Michael Bruce, before the age of twenty-one, wrote "The Ode to the Cuckoo," and sung the beauties of his native lake in verse that almost rivals the Muse of Thomson.

Thus settled in a highly agreeable and interesting locality, and in a position suited to his tastes, it was expected that the promise of "Anster Fair" would be redeemed by something worthy of his literary and scholastic reputation. Accordingly much interest was excited, when in 1822 his second poem, "The Thane of Fife," appeared. The public expectation was disappointed, for the poem was a manifest falling off, and if not an entire failure, so much so, that its second part never was published. Of his next three poems it will be enough to give the names, seeing none of them added to his reputation. They were issued in the following order, "Papistry stormed, or the Dingin' Down o' the Cathedral," "Cardinal Bethune, a drama in Five Acts," and "John Baliol, an Historical Drama."

In 1831 a vacancy occurred in the chair of Oriental languages in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, and he became a candidate, but was unsuccessful. At the end of other three years, the same chair was again vacant, and he was at once appointed to the professorship by his friend Jeffrey, then Lord Advocate. He had now attained the object of his highest ambition, and he retained his professorship till within a short time of his death. His promotion did not necessitate his removing from Dollar, except during the session, and he

always spent the summer there. In his domestic concerns he practised strict economy, a lesson he owed to the experience of his youth ; and as he was never married, his sister took charge of his household affairs.

His last publication, "Hebrew Dramas," founded on incidents of Bible History, was published in 1845. Of this work Lord Jeffrey expressed a high opinion. They are written with great purity and simplicity of language and in an Oriental cast of thought and style, which shows how minute was the study which he bestowed upon the characters they delineate. They served to cover his retreat from the poetic arena with dignity, though they can hardly be said to have increased his fame. His death took place at Dollar, in 1848 ; and at his own request he was buried at Anstruther, where his friends and admirers have placed a monument over his remains.

The works already noticed are all that he published in a collected form ; yet besides a number of small poems and ballads, he contributed prose translations from Greek and German to the "Edinburgh Literary Journal," in 1830, and in the same periodical, carried on a correspondence with the "Ettrick Shepherd," and sent a new metrical translation of the Psalms, which was published separately. In 1836-37, he contributed a series of five "Hebrew Idylls" to the "Scottish Christian Herald," which, with a project for an edition of the Scottish poets, for which he wrote a life of Allan Ramsay, and a Synopsis of Syriac Grammar published in 1840, form all of his literary labours, which appear to have been published. His biographer, Mr Conolly, is in possession of MSS., containing his "Lectures on Palestine, and Hebrew Literature," with other writings, but judging from a "Lecture on Hebrew Poetry," and the few letters that appear in his biography, he did not attain to much facility or graceful ease in prose composition, nor is the want of these

compensated for by depth, or vigour of thought. Of his linguistic scholarship he has left no evidence, but the fame of his acquirements conveys the impression that his power of mastering languages was something wonderful. In disposition he is said to have been the most amiable and unselfish of men, in character humble, unassuming, and unaffectedly pious; simple in his tastes, and fond of nature and innocent enjoyment, and with a quick sense of the ludicrous in all things. While apparently an unconcerned spectator of what was passing around him, he was an accurate observer of men and manners. He resembled his great contemporary Scott in being perfectly free from envy, a weakness on which he wrote some beautiful lines in his last publication. The following is literally true of himself,

"For me (be thanked my gracious God !)
Some seraph, kind and good,
Surely, hath rooted from my heart
A weed so rank and rude ;
Whence, I make other's bliss my own,
With musings sweet and wild ;
And walk among the sons of men,
Rejoicing as a child."

But it is as a poet that he has any claims on the notice of posterity, and, as such, he fills a niche in Scottish, or rather, in English literature, which had not been pre-occupied, and from which he is not likely to be expelled.

It is true that his position may be said to be yet undefined, for, amidst the extraordinary luxuriance of the poetic literature of the time, the unobtrusive playfulness and unimpassioned mirth of "Anster Fair" was little fitted to contest the attention of the multitude, with its powerfully stimulating and brilliant competitors. With the exception of the notice by Jeffrey, and one or two others of minor importance, it may be said to have escaped the dissection of the critics,

This may have been greatly owing to that unobtrusive modesty, which was one of Tennant's most marked characteristics, and which, along with his physical incapacity, kept him aloof from the literary connections to which a good deal of critical praise and censure owe their origin. It is to be observed, too, that he treated "Anster Fair" as a sort of illegitimate progeny of his muse in her frolicsome and unbridled youth, and that he never lost hope of being able to produce something that would bear his poetic reputation more in keeping with his notions of respectability. His weakness as a poet was the want of passion, and the success of "Anster Fair" is owing to its being of that rare species of poetry in which passion has no place.

It is a poem to be enjoyed—as "Tickler" said; to be taken in the pocket on your trip to Holland, and read in the Zuyder Zee. "It is a fine thing, North! full of life, and glee, and glamour."

CANTO FIRST.

I.

WHILE some of Troy and pettish heroes sing,
And some of Rome and chiefs of pious fame,
And some of men that thought it harmless thing
To smite off heads in Mars's bloody game,
And some of Eden's garden gay with spring,
And Hell's dominions terrible to name—
I sing a theme far livelier, happier, gladder,
I sing of ANSTER FAIR, and bonny MAGGIE LAUDER.

II.

What time from east, from west, from south, from north,
From every hamlet, town, and smoky city,
Laird, clown, and beau, to Anster Fair, came forth,
The young, the gay, the handsome, and the witty,
To try in various sport and game their worth,
Whilst prize before them MAGGIE sat, the pretty,
And after many a feat, and joke, and banter,
Fair MAGGIE's hand was won by mighty ROB THE
RANTER.

III.

Muse, that from top of thine old Greekish hill,
Didst the harp-fing'ring Theban younker view,
And on his lips bid bees their sweets distil,
And gav'st the chariot that the white swans drew,
Oh let me scoop, from thine ethereal rill,
Some little palmfulls of the blessed dew,
And lend the swan-drawn car, that safely I,
Like him, may scorn the earth, and burst into the sky !

IV.

Our themes are like ; for he the games extoll'd
Held in the chariot shaken Grecian plains,
Where the vain victor, arrogant and bold,
Parsley or laurel got for all his pains ;
I sing of sports more worthy to be told,
Where better prize the Scottish victor gains :
What were the crowns of Greece but wind and bladder,
Compared with marriage-bed of bonny MAGGIE LAUDER ?

V.

And oh that King Apollo would but grant
A little spark of that transcendant flame,
That fir'd the Chian rhapsodist to chant
How vied the bowmen for Ulysses' dame,
And him of Rome to sing how Atalanta
Plied, dart in hand, the suitor-slaughtering game,
Till the bright gold, bowl'd forth along the grass,
Betray'd her to a spouse, and stopp'd the bounding lass !

VI.

But lo ! from bosom of yon southern cloud,
I see the chariot come which Pindar bore ;
I see the swans, whose white necks, arching proud,
Glitter with golden yoke, approach my shore ;
For me they come—O Phœbus, potent god !
Spare, spare me now—enough, good king—no more—
A little spark I ask'd in moderation,
Why scorch me ev'n to death with fiery inspiration ?

VII.

My pulse beats fire—my pericranium glows,
Like baker's oven, with poetic heat ;
A thousand bright ideas, spurning prose,
Are in a twinkling hatch'd in Fancy's seat ;
Zounds ! they will fly out at my ears and nose,
If through my mouth they find not passage fleet ;
I hear them buzzing deep within my noddle,
Like bees that in their hive confus'dly hum and huddle.

VIII.

How now ?—what's this ?—my very eyes I trow,
Drop on my hands their base prosaic scales ;
My visual orbs are purg'd from film, and lo !
Instead of ANSTER's turnip-bearing vales,
I see old Fairyland's mirac'lous show,
Her trees of tinsel kiss'd by freakish gales,
Her ouphes, that cloak'd in leaf-gold skim the breeze,
And fairies swarming thick as mites in rotten cheese.

IX.

I see the puny fair-chinn'd goblin rise
Suddenly glorious from his mustard-pot ;
I see him wave his hand in seemly wise,
And button round him tight his fulgent coat ;
While MAGGIE LAUDER, in a great surprise,
Sits startled on her chair, yet fearing not ;
I see him ope his dewy lips ; I hear
The strange and strict command addressed to MAGGIE'S
ear.

X.

I see the RANTER with bagpipe on back,
As to the Fair he rides jocundly on ;
I see the crowds that press with speed not slack
Along each road that leads to ANSTER Loan ;
I see the suitors, that, deep-sheath'd in sack,
Hobble and tumble, bawl and swear, and groan ;
I see—but fie, thou brainish Muse ! what mean
These vapourings, and brags of what by thee is seen ?

XI.

Go to—be cooler, and in order tell
To all my good co-townsmen list'ning round,
How every merry incident befell,
Whereby our Loan shall ever be renown'd ;
Say first, what elf or fairy could impel
Fair MAG, with wit, and wealth, and beauty crown'd,
To put her suitors to such waggish test,
And give her happy bed to him that jumpèd best ?

XII.

'Twas on a keen December night ; John Frost
Drove thro' mid air his chariot, icy-wheel'd,
And from the sky's crisp ceiling star-embost,
Whiff'd off the clouds that the pure blue conceal'd ;
The hornless moon amid her brilliant host
Shone, and with silver sheeted lake and field ;
'Twas cutting cold ; I'm sure, each trav'ller's nose
Was pinch'd right red that night, and numb'd were all
his toes.

XIII.

Not so were MAGGIE LAUDER's toes, as she
In her warm chamber at her supper sate
(For 'twas that hour when burgesses agree
To eat their suppers ere the night grows late):
Alone she sat, and pensive as may be
A young fair lady, wishful of a mate ;
Yet with her teeth held now and then a-picking,
Her stomach to refresh, the breast-bone of a chicken.

XIV.

She thought upon her suitors, that with love
Besiege her chamber all the livelong day,
Aspiring each her virgin heart to move
With courtship's every troublesome essay—
Calling her angel, sweeting, fondling, dove,
And other nicknames in love's friv'lous way ;
While she, though their addresses still she heard,
Held back from all her heart, and still no beau preferr'd.

XV.

“What, what !” quo’ MAG, “must thus it be my doom
To spend my prime in maidhood’s joyless state,
And waste away my sprightly body’s bloom
In spouseless solitude without a mate—
Still toying with my suitors, as they come
Cringing in lowly courtship to my gate ?
Fool that I am, to live unwed so long !
More fool, since I am woo’d by such a clam’rous throng !

XVI.

For was e’er heiress with much gold in chest,
And dowr’d with acres of wheat-bearing land,
By such a pack of men, in amorous quest,
Fawningly spaniel’d to bestow her hand ?
Where’er I walk, the air that feeds my breast
Is by the gusty sighs of lovers fann’d ;
Each wind that blows wafts love-cards to my lap ;
Whilst I—ah stupid MAG !—avoid each am’rous trap !

XVII.

Then come, let me my suitors’ merits weigh,
And in the worthiest lad my spouse select :—
First, there’s our ANSTER merchant, Norman Ray,
A powder’d wight with golden buttons deck’d,
That stinks with scent, and chats like popinjay,
And struts with phiz tremendously erect :
Four brigs has he, that on the broad sea swim ;—
He is a pompous fool—I cannot think of him.

XVIII.

Next is the maltster Andrew Strang, that takes
His seat i'the bailie's loft on Sabbath-day,
With paltry visage white as oaten cakes,
As if no blood ran gurgling in his clay ;
Heav'ns ! what an awkward hunch the fellow makes,
As to the priest he does the bow repay ;
Yet he is rich—a very wealthy man, true—
But, by the holy rood, I will have none of Andrew !

XIX.

Then for the lairds—there's Melvil of Carnbee,
A handsome gallant, and a beau of spirit ;
Who can go down the dance so well as he ?
And who can fiddle with such manly merit ?
Ay, but he is too much the debauchee—
His cheeks seem sponges oozing port and claret ;
In marrying him I should bestow myself ill—
And so, I'll not have you, thou fuddler, Harry Melvil !

XX.

There's Cunningham of Barns, that still assails
With verse and billet-doux my gentle heart—
A bookish squire, and good at telling tales,
That rhymes and whines of Cupid, flame, and dart ;
But, oh ! his mouth a sorry smell exhales,
And on his nose sprouts horribly the wart ;
What though there be a fund of lore and fun in him ?
He has a rotten breath—I cannot think of Cunningham !

XXI.

Why then, there's Allardyce, that plies his suit
And battery of courtship more and more ;
Spruce Lochmalonie, that with booted foot
Each morning wears the threshold of my door ;
Auchmoutie too and Bruce, that persecute
My tender heart with am'rous buffets sore :—
Whom to my hand and bed should I promote !—
Eh-lah ! what sight is this?—what ails my mustard-pot?"

XXII.

Here broke the lady her soliloquy ;
For in a twink her pot of mustard, lo !
Self-moved, like Jove's wheel'd stool that rolls on high,
'Gan caper on her table to and fro,
And hopp'd and fidgeted before her eye,
Spontaneous, here and there, a wondrous show :
As leaps, instinct with mercury, a bladder,
So leaps the mustard-pot of bonny MAGGIE LAUDER.

XXIII.

Soon stopp'd its dance th' ignoble utensil,
When from its round and small recess there came
Thin curling wreaths of paly smoke, that still,
Fed by some magic unapparent flame,
Mount to the chamber's stucco'd roof, and fill
Each nook with fragrance, and refresh the dame :
Ne'er smelt a Phoenix-nest so sweet, I wot,
As smelt the lucious fumes of MAGGIE'S mustard-pot.

XXIV.

It reeked censer-like ; then, strange to tell !
Forth from the smoke, that thick and thicker grows,
A fairy of the height of half an ell,
In dwarfish pomp, majestically rose :
His feet upon the table 'stablished well,
Stood trim and splendid in their snake-skin hose ;
Gleam'd topaz-like the breeches he had on,
Whose waistband like the bend of summer rainbow
shone.

XXV.

His coat seem'd fashion'd of the threads of gold,
That intertwine the clouds at sun-set hour,
And certes, Iris with her shuttle bold
Wove the rich garment in her lofty bower ;
To form its buttons were the Pleiads old
Plucked from their sockets, sure by genie-power,
And sew'd upon the coat's resplendent hem ;
Its neck was lovely green, each cuff a sapphire gem.

XXVI.

As when the churlish spirit of the cape
To Gama, voyaging to Mozambique,
Up-popp'd from sea, a tangle-tassel'd shape,
With mussels sticking inch-thick on his cheek,
And 'gan with tortoise-shell his limbs to scrape,
And yawn'd his monstrous blobberlips to speak ;
Brave Gama's hairs stood bristled at the sight,
And on the tarry deck sunk down his men with fright.

XXVII.

So sudden (not so huge and grimly dire)
Uprose to MAGGIE'S stounded eyne the sprite,
As fair a fairy as you could desire,
With ruddy cheek, and chin and temples white ;
His eyes seem'd little points of sparkling fire,
That, as he look'd charm'd with inviting light ;
He was, indeed, as bonny a fay and brisk,
As e'er on long moon-beam was seen to ride and frisk.

XXVIII.

Around his bosom, by a silken zone,
A little bagpipe gracefully was bound,
Whose pipes like hollow stalks of silver shone,
The glist'ring tiny avenues of sound ;
Beneath his arm the windy bag, full blown,
Heav'd up its purple like an orange round,
And only waited orders to discharge
Its blasts with charming groan into the sky at large.

XXIX.

He wav'd his hand to MAGGIE, as she sat
Amaz'd and startl'd on her carvèd chair ;
Then took his petty feather-garnished hat
In honour to the lady, from his hair,
And made a bow so dignifiedly flat,
That MAG was witchèd with his beauish air :
At last he spoke with voice so soft, so kind,
So sweet, as if his throat with fiddle-strings were lin'd :

XXX.

"Lady! be not offended that I dare,
Thus forward and impertinently rude,
Emerge, uncall'd, into the upper air,
Intruding on a maiden's solitude;
Nay, do not be alarm'd, thou lady fair!
Why startle so?—I am a fairy good;
Not one of those that, envying beauteous maids,
Speckle their skins with moles, and fill with spleens
their heads.

XXXI.

For, as concealed in this clay house of mine,
I overheard thee in a lowly voice,
Weighing thy lovers' merits, with design
Now on the worthiest lad to fix thy choice,
I have up-bolted from my paltry shrine,
To give thee, sweet-eyed lass, my best advice;
For, by the life of Oberon my king!
To pick good husband out is, sure, a ticklish thing.

XXXII.

And never shall good Tommy Puck permit
Such an assemblage of unwonted charms
To cool some lecher's lewd licentious fit,
And sleep imbounded by his boisterous arms;
What though his fields by twenty ploughs be split,
And golden wheat wave riches on his farms?
His house is shame—it cannot, shall not be;
A greater, happier doom, O MAG, awaiteth thee!

XXXIII.

Strange are indeed the steps by which thou must
Thy glory's happy eminence attain ;
But Fate hath fix'd them, and 'tis Fate's t'adjust
The mighty links that ends to means enchain ;
Nor may poor Puck his little fingers thrust
Into the links, to break Jove's steel in twain ;
Then MAGGIE, hear, and let my words descend
Into thy soul, for much it boots thee to attend.

XXXIV.

To-morrow, when o'er th' Isle of May the sun
Lifts up his forehead bright with golden crown,
Call to thine house the light-heel'd men that run
Afar on messages for ANSTER Town,
Fellows of sp'rit, by none in speed out-done,
Of lofty voice, enough a drum to drown,
And bid them hie, post-haste, through all the nation,
And publish, far and near, this famous proclamation :

XXXV.

Let them proclaim, with voice's loudest tone,
That on your next approaching market-day,
Shall merry sports be held in ANSTER Loan,
With celebration notable and gay ;
And that a prize, than gold or costly stone
More precious, shall the victor's toils repay,
Ev'n thy own form with beauties so replete—
Nay, MAGGIE, start not thus !—thy marriage-bed, my
sweet.

XXXVI.

First, on the Loan shall ride full many an ass,
With stout whip-wielding rider on his back,
Intent with twinkling hoof to pelt the grass,
And pricking up his long ears at the crack ;
Next o'er the ground the daring men shall pass,
Half-coffin'd in their cumbrances of sack,
With heads just peeping from their shrines of bag,
Hobbling bobbling round, and straining hard for MAG.

XXXVII.

Then shall the pipers groaningly begin
In squeaking rivalry their merry strain,
Till Billyness shall echo back the din,
And Innergelly woods shall ring again ;
Last, let each man that hopes thy hand to win
By witty product of prolific brain,
Approach, and, confident of Pallas' aid,
Claim by an hum'rous tale possession of thy bed.

XXXVIII.

Such are the wondrous tests by which, my love !
The merits of thy husband must be tried,
And he that shall in these superior prove
(One proper husband shall the Fates provide),
Shall from the Loan with thee triumphant move
Homeward, the jolly bridegroom and the bride,
And at thy house shall eat the marriage-feast,
When I'll pop up again." Here Tommy Puck surceast.

XXXIX.

He ceas'd, and to his wee mouth, dewy-wet,
His bagpipe's tube of silver up he held,
And underneath his down-press'd arm he set
Its purple bag, that with a tempest swell'd ;
He play'd and pip'd so sweet, that never yet
Had MAG a piper heard that Puck excell'd ;
Had Midas heard a tune so exquisite,
By Heav'n ! his lone base ears had quiver'd with delight.

XL.

Tingle the fire-ir'ns, poker, tongs, and grate,
Responsive to the blithesome melody !
The tables and the chairs inanimate
Wish they had muscles now to trip it high !
Wave back and forwards at a wondrous rate,
The window-curtains, touch'd with sympathy !
Fork, knife, and trencher, almost break their sloth,
And caper on their ends upon the table-cloth !

XLI.

How then could MAGGIE, sprightly, smart and young,
Withstand that bagpipe's blithe awak'ning air ?
She, as her ear-drum caught the sounds, up-sprung
Like lightning, and despis'd her idle chair,
And into all the dance's graces flung
The bounding members of her body fair ;
From nook to nook through all her room she tript,
And whirl'd like whirligig, and reel'd, and bobb'd and
skipt.

XLII.

At last the little piper ceas'd to play,
And deftly bow'd, and said, "My dear, good night ;"
Then in a smoke evanish'd clean away,
With all his gaudy apparatus bright :
As breaks soap-bubble, which a boy in play
Blows from his short tobacco-pipe aright,
So broke poor Puck from view, and on the spot
Y-smoking aloes-reek he left his mustard-pot.

XLIII.

Whereat the furious lady's wriggling feet
Forgot to pelt and patter in such wise,
And down she gladly sunk upon her seat,
Fatigu'd and panting from her exercise ;
She sat, and mus'd a while, as it was meet,
On what so late had occupied her eyes ;
Then to her bed-room went, and doff'd her gown,
And laid upon her couch her charming person down.

XLIV.

Some say that MAGGIE slept so sound that night,
As never she had slept since she was born ;
But sure am I, that, thoughtful of the sprite,
She twenty times upon her bed did turn ;
For still appear'd to stand before her sight
The gaudy goblin, glorious from his urn,
And still within the cavern of her ear,
Th' injunction echoing rung, so strict and strange to hear.

XLV.

But when the silver-harness'd steeds, that draw
The car of morning up the empyreal height,
Had snorted day upon North-Berwick Law,
And from their glist'ring loose manes toss'd the light,
Immediately from bed she rose (such awe
Of Tommy press'd her soul with anxious weight),
And donn'd her tissued fragrant morning vest,
And to fulfil his charge her earliest care address.

XLVI.

Straight to her house she tarried not to call
Her messengers and heralds swift of foot,
Men skill'd to hop o'er dykes and ditches ; all
Gifted with sturdy brazen lungs to boot ;
She bade them halt at every town, and bawl
Her proclamation out with mighty bruit,
Inviting loud, to ANSTER Loan and FAIR,
The Scottish beau to jump for her sweet person there.

XLVII.

They took each man his staff into his hand ;
They button'd round their bodies close their coats ;
They flew divided through the frozen land ;
Were never seen such swiftly-trav'ling Scots !
Nor ford, slough, mountain, could their speed withstand ;
Such fleetness have the men that feed on oats !
They skirr'd, they flounder'd thro' the sleets and snows,
And puff'd against the winds, that bit in spite each nose.

XLVIII.

They halted at each wall'd-fenc'd town renown'd,
And every lesser borough of the nation ;
And with the trumpet's welkin-rifting sound,
And tuck of drum of loud reverberation,
Tow'rds the four wings of heav'n, they, round and round,
Proclaim'd in Stentor-like vociferation,
That, on the approaching day of ANSTER market,
Should merry sports be held :—Hush ! listen now, and
hark it !—

XLIX.

“ Ho ! beaux and pipers, wits and jumpers, ho !
Ye buxom blades that like to kiss the lasses ;
Ye that are skill'd sew'd up in sacks to go ;
Ye that excel in *horsemanship* of asses ;
Ye that are smart at telling tales, and know
On Rhyme's two stilts to crutch it up Parnassus ;
Ho ! lads, your sacks, pipes, asses, tales, prepare,
To jump, play, ride, and rhyme, at ANSTER Loan and
FAIR !

L.

First, on the green turf shall each ass draw nigh,
Caparison'd or clouted for the race,
With mounted rider, sedulous to ply
Cudgel or whip, and win the foremost place ;
Next shall th' advent'rous men, that dare to try
Their bodies' springiness in hempen case,
Put on their bags, and, with ridic'lous bound,
And sweat and huge turmoil, pass lab'ring o'er the
ground.

B

LI.

Then shall the pipers, gentlemen o' the drone,
Their pipes in gleesome competition screw,
And grace, with loud solemnity of groan,
Each his invented tune to th' audience new ;
Last shall each witty bard, to whom is known
The craft of Helicon's rhyme-jingling crew,
His story tell in' good poetic strains,
And make his learned tongue the midwife to his brains.

LII.

And he whose tongue the wittiest tale shall tell,
Whose bagpipe shall the sweetest tune resound,
Whose heels, tho' clogg'd with sack, shall jump it well,
Whose ass shall foot with fleetest hoof the ground,
He who from all the rest shall bear the bell,
With victory in every trial crown'd,
He (mark it, lads !) to MAGGIE LAUDER's house
That self-same night shall go, and take her for his spouse."

LIII.

Here ceas'd the criers of the sturdy lungs ;
But here the gossip Fame (whose body's pores
Are naught but open ears and babbling tongues,
That gape and wriggle on her hide in scores)
Began to jabber o'er each city's throngs,
Blaz'ning the news through all the Scottish shores ;
Nor had she blabb'd, methinks, so stoutly, since
Queen Dido's peace was broke by Troy's love-truant
Prince.

LIV.

In every Lowland vale and Highland glen,
She nois'd th' approaching fun of ANSTER FAIR ;
Ev'n when in sleep were laid the sons of men,
Snoring away on good chaff-beds their care,
You might have heard her faintly murm'ring then,
For lack of audience, to the midnight air :
From Fife's East Nook to farthest Stornoway,
Fair MAGGIE'S loud report thus rapidly was borne away.

LV.

And soon the mortals that design to strive,
By meritorious jumping for the prize,
Train up their bodies, ere the day arrive,
To th' lumpish sack-encumber'd exercise ;
You might have seen no less than four or five
Hobbling in each town-loan in awkward guise ;
E'en little boys, when from the school let out,
Mimick'd the bigger beaux, and leap'd in pokes about.

LVI.

Through cots and granges with industrious foot,
By laird and knight were light-heel'd asses sought,
So that no ass of any great repute,
For twenty Scots marks could have then been bought ;
Nor e'er, before or since, the long-ear'd brute
Was such a goodly acquisition thought.
The pipers vex'd their ears and pipes t'invent
Some tune that might the taste of ANSTER MAG content.

LVII.

Each poet, too, whose lore-manurèd brain
Is hot of soil, and sprouts up mushroom wit,
Ponder'd his noddle into extreme pain
T' excogitate some story nice and fit ;
When rack'd had been his skull some hours in vain,
He, to relax his mind a little bit,
Plung'd deep into a sack his precious body,
And school'd it for the race, and hopp'd around his
study.

LVIII.

Such was the sore preparatory care
Of all th' ambitious that for April sigh :
Nor sigh the young alone for ANSTER FAIR ;
Old men and wives, erewhile content to die,
Who hardly can forsake their easy-chair,
To take, abroad, farewell of sun and sky,
With new desire of life now glowing, pray,
That they may just o'erlive our famous market-day.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

LAST night I dream'd that to my dark bedside
Came, white with rays, the poet of the "Quhair,"
And drew my curtain silently aside,
And stood and smil'd majestically fair ;
He to my finger then a ring applied
(It glitter'd like Aurora's yellow hair),
And gave his royal head a pleasant wag,
And said, "Go on, my boy, and celebrate thy MAG !"

II.

The sun, upcharioting from Capricorn,
Had 'tween the Ram's horns thrust his gilded nose ;
And now his bright fist drops, each April morn,
O'er hill and dale, the daisy and the rose ;
Wantons the lewd Earth with the god unshorn,
And from her womb the infant verdure throws,
Whilst he, good paramour ! leaves Tethys' valley,
Each morn by five o'clock, with her to sport and dally.

III.

Old Kelly-law, the kindly nurse of sheep,
Puts on her daisy-tissued gown of green ;
On all her slopes so verdurous and steep,
The bleating children of the flock are seen ;
While with a heart where mirth and pleasure keep
Their dwelling, and with honest brow serene,
The shepherd eyes his flock in mood of glee,
And wakes with oaten pipe the echoes of Carnbee.

IV.

And see how Airdrie woods upshoot on high
Their leafy living glories to the day,
As if they long'd t' embrace the vaulty sky
With their long branchy arms so green and gay !
Balcarras-craig, so rough, and hard, and dry,
Enliv'd into beauty by the ray,
Heaves up, bedeck'd with flow'rs, his ruffian-side,
Like giant hung with gauds, and boasts his tricky
pride.

V.

Ev'n on the King's-muir jigs the jolly Spring,
Scattering from whin to whin the new perfume ;
While, near the sea-coast, Flora, tarrying,
Touches the garden's parterres into bloom ;
With joy the villages and cities ring ;
Cowherd and cow rejoice, and horse and groom ;
The ploughman laughs amid his joyous care ;
And ANSTER burghers laugh in prospect of their Fair.

VI.

For lo ! now peeping just above the vast
Vault of the German Sea, in east afar,
Appears full many a brig and schooner's mast,
Their topsails strutting with the vernal harr ;
Near and more near they come, and show at last
Their ocean-thumping hulks all black with tar ;
Their stems are pointed toward ANSTER pier,
While, flying o'er their sterns, the well-known flags
appear.

VII.

From clear-skied France and muddy Zuyder-Zee,
They come, replenish'd with the stores of trade ;
Some from the Hollander of lumpish knee
Convey his lintseed, stow'd in bag or cade ;
Heav'n bless him ! may his breeches countless be ;
And warm and thick, and ever undecay'd !
For he it was that first supply'd the Scots
With linen for their sarks, and stout frieze for their coats.

VIII.

Some bring, in many an anker hooped strong,
From Flushing's port, the palate-biting gin,
Th' inspirer of the tavern's noisy song,
The top-delight, the nectar of each inn,
That sends a-bounding through the veins along
The loit'ring blood when frosty days begin,
The bev'rage wherein fiddlers like to nuzzle,
The gauger's joy to *seize*, and old wife's joy to guzzle !

IX.

Some from Garonne and bonny banks of Seine,
Transport in pipes the blood of Bacchus' berry,
Wherewith our lairds may fume the fuddl'd brain,
And grow, by bousing, boisterously merry ;
And whereby, too, their cheeks a glow may gain,
Abashing ev'n the red of July's cherry ;
Oh, it is right—our lairds do well, I ween ;
A bottle of black wine is worth all Hippocrene !

X.

Soon, hurried forward by the skittish gales,
In ANSTER harbour every vessel moors ;
Furl'd by the seamen are the flapping sails ;
Fix'd are the halsers to the folk-clad shores ;
Their holds discharge the wealth of Gallia's vales,
And Amsterdam's and Flushing's useful stores,
All to augment, with commerce' various ware,
The bustle and the trade of famous ANSTER FAIR.

XI.

Nor distant now the day ; the cream-fac'd sun,
That, rising, shall engild to-morrow's air,
Shall shine with courteous beams upon the fun
And frolic of the celebrated Fair ;
And now, already, have the folk begun
(So eager are they the delight to share),
In flocks to MAGGIE'S borough to resort,
That they may all, betimes, be present at the sport.

XII.

Each hedge-lin'd highway of the king, that leads
Or straightly or obliquely to the Loan,
Seems, as the Muse looks downwards, pav'd with heads,
And hats and cowls of those that bustle on ;
From Johnny Groat's House to the border-meads,
From isle of Arran to the mouth of Don,
In thousands puffingly to Fife they run,
Gold in their pockets lodg'd, and in their noddles fun.

XIII.

Say, Muse, who first, who last, on foot or steed,
Came candidates for MAGGIE to her town ?
St Andrew's sprightly students first proceed,
Clad in their foppery of sleeveless gown ;
Forth whistling from Salvador's gate they speed,
Full many a mettlesome and fiery loun,
Forgetting Horace for a while and Tully,
Mad t' embag their limbs and leap it beautifully.

XIV.

For ev'n in Learning's cobweb'd halls had rung
The loud report of MAGGIE LAUDER's fame,
And Pedantry's Greek-coning sapient tongue
In songs had wagg'd in honour of her name ;
Up from their mouldy books and tasks had sprung
Bigent and Magistrand to try the game ;
Prelections ceas'd—old Alma Mater slept ;
And o'er his silent rooms the ghost of Wardlaw wept.

XV.

So down in troops the red-clad students come
As kittens blithe, a joke-exchanging crew,
And in their heads bear learned Greece and Rome,
And haply Cyprus in their bodies too ;
Some on their journey pipe and play ; and some
Talk long of MAG, how fair she was to view,
And as they talk (ay me ! so much the sadder,)
Backwards they scale the steps of honest Plato's ladder.

XVI.

Others, their heels of weariness to cheat,
Repeated tales of classic merriment,
How the fool Faunus, on his noiseless feet,
At midnight to the cave of Tmolus went,
Scorch'd as he was with Venus' fiercest heat,
On cuckold-making mischievous intent,
Till, from the horny fist of hairy Hercules,
He got upon the cheek a most confounded jerk, alas !

XVII.

Nor come they only down ; in chaise or gig
Th' endocrin'd sage professors lolling ride,
Their heads with curl'd vastidity of wig
Thatch'd round and round, and queerly beautified ;
In silken hose is sheath'd each learned leg ;
White are their cravats, long and trimly tied.
Some say they came to jump for MAGGIE too,
But college-records say they came the sport to view.

XVIII.

See as their coach-wheels scour the Eastburn-lane,
Rattling as if the pavement up to tear,
How men and women, huddling in their train,
And hallooing shouts of loud applause appear !
Red-cheek'd and white-cheek'd, stout and feeble men,
With staff or staff-less, draw to ANSTER near ;
And such a mob come trampling o'er King's-muir,
They raise a cloud of dust that does the sun obscure.

XIX.

Next from Denino's every house and hut,
Her simple guileless people hie away ;
That day the doors of parish-school were shut,
And every scholar got his leave to play :
Down rush they light of heart and light of foot,
Big ploughmen, in their coats of hodden grey,
Weavers despising now both web and treadle,
Collier and collier's wife, and minister and beadle.

XX.

Next, from the well-air'd ancient town of Crail,
Go out her craftsmen with tumultuous din,
Her wind-bleach'd fishers, sturdy-limb'd and hale,
Her in-knee'd tailors, garrulous and thin ;
And some are flush'd with horns of pithy ale,
And some are fierce with drams of smuggl'd gin,
While, to augment his drowth, each to his jaws
A good Crail capon holds, at which he rugs and gnaws.

XXI.

And from Kingsbarns and hamlet clep'd of boars,
And farms around (their names too long to add),
Sally the villagers and hinds in scores,
Tenant and laird, and hedger, hodden-clad :
Bolted are all the East-nook houses' doors ;
Ev'n toothless wives pass westward, strangely glad,
Propping their trem'lous limbs on oaken stay,
And in their red plaids drest as if 'twere Sabbath day.

XXII.

And bare-foot lasses, on whose ruddy face
Unfurl'd is health's rejoicing banner seen,
Trick'd in their Sunday mutches edg'd with lace,
Tippets of white, and frocks of red and green,
Come tripping o'er the roads with jocund pace,
Gay as May-morning, tidy, gim, and clean,
Whilst, joggling at each wench's side, her joe
Cracks many a rustic joke, his pow'r of wit to show.

XXIII.

Then jostling forward on the western road,
Approach the folk of wind-swept Pittenweem,
So num'rous, that the highways, long and broad,
One waving field of gowns and coat-tails seem ;
The fat man puffing goes oppress'd with load
Of cumb'rous flesh and corpulence extreme ;
The lean man bounds along, and with his toes
Smites on the fat man's heels, that slow before him goes.

XXIV.

St Monance, Elie, and adjacent farms,
Turn their mechanics, fishers, farmers out ;
Sun-burnt and shoeless schoolboys rush in swarms,
With childish trick, and revelry and shout ;
Mothers bear little children in their arms,
Attended by their giggling daughters stout ;
Clowns, cobblers, cotters, tanners, weavers, beaux,
Hurry and hop along in clusters and in rows.

XXV.

And every husbandman, round Largo Law,
Hath scrap'd his huge-wheel'd dung-cart fair and clean,
Wherein, on sacks stuff'd full of oaten straw,
Sit the Goodwife, Tam, Katey, Jock, and Jean ;
In flow'rs and ribbons drest, the horses draw
Stoutly their creaking cumbersome machine,
As on his cart-head sits the Goodman proud,
And cheerily cracks his whip and whistles clear and loud.

XXVI.

Then from her coal-pits Dysart vomits forth
Her subterranean men of colour dun,
Poor human mouldwarps ! doom'd to scrape in earth -
Cimmerian people, strangers to the sun ;
Gloomy as soot, with faces grim and swarth,
They march, most sourly leering every one,
Yet very keen, at Anster Loan, to share
The merriments and sports to be accomplish'd there.

XXVII.

Nor did Path-head detain her wrangling race
Of weavers, toiling at their looms for bread ;
For now their slippery shuttles rest a space
From flying through their labyrinths of thread ;
Their treadle-shaking feet now scour apace
Through Gallowtown with levity of tread ;
So on they pass, with sack in hand, full bent
To try their sinews' strength in dire experiment.

XXVIII.

And long Kirkaldy, from each dirty street
Her numerous population eastward throws ;
Her roguish boys with bare unstocking'd feet,
Her rich ship-owners, gen'rous and jocose,
Her prosp'rous merchants, sober and discreet,
Her coxcombs pantaloons'd, and powder'd beaux ;
Her pretty lasses tripping on their great toes,
With foreheads white as milk, or any boil'd potatoes.

XXIX.

And from Kinghorn jump hastily along
Her ferry-men and poor inhabitants :
And th' upland hamlet, where, as told in song,
Tam Lutar play'd of yore his lively rants,
Is left dispeopled of her brose-fed throng,
For eastward scud they now as thick as ants :
Dunfermline, too, so famed for checks and ticks,
Sends out her loom-bred men, with bags and walking-
sticks.

XXX.

And market-maids, and apron'd wives, that bring
Their gingerbread in baskets to the Fair;
And cadgers with their creels, that hang by string
From their lean horse-ribs, rubbing off the hair;
And crook-legg'd cripples, that on crutches swing
Their shabby persons with a noble air;
And fiddlers with their fiddles in their cases,
And packmen with their packs of ribbons, gauze, and
laces.

XXXI.

And from Kinross, whose dusty streets unpaved
Are whirl'd through heav'n on summer's windy day,
Whose plats of cabbage-bearing ground are laved
By Leven's waves, that clear as crystal play,
Jog her brisk burghers, spruce and cleanly shaved,
Her sullen cutlers and her weavers gay,
Her ploughboys in their botch'd and clumsy jackets,
Her clowns with cobbl'd shoon stuck full of iron tackets.

XXXII.

Next ride on sleek-mane'd horses bay or brown,
Smacking their whips and spurring bloodily,
The writers of industrious Cupar town,
Good social mortals skill'd the pen to ply;
Lo! how their garments as they gallop down,
Waving behind them in the breezes fly;
As upward spurn'd to heav'n's blue bending roof,
Dash'd is the dusty road from every bounding hoof.

XXXIII.

And clerks with ruffled shirts and frizzled hairs,
Their tassel'd half-boots clear as looking-glass,
And sheriffs learn'd, and unlearn'd sheriff-mairs,
And messengers-at-arms, with brows of brass,
Come strutting down, or single or in pairs,
Some on high horse and some on lowly ass ;
With blacksmiths, barbers, butchers, and their brats,
And some had new hats on, and some came wanting
hats.

XXXIV.

Astraddle on their proud steeds full of fire,
From all the tree-girt country-seats around,
Comes many a huffy, many a kindly squire,
In showy garb, worth many a silver pound ;
While close behind, in livery's base attire,
Follows poor lacquey with small-bellied hound,
Carrying, upon his shoulders slung, the bag
Wherein his master means to risk his neck for MAG.

XXXV.

From all her lanes and alleys, fair Dundee
Has sent her happy citizens away ;
They come with mickle jolliment and glee,
Crossing in clumsy boat their shallow Tay ;
Their heads are bonneted most fair to see,
And of the tartan is their back's array :
From Perth, Dunkeld, from Brechin, Forfar, Glams,
Roll down the sweaty crowds, with wearied legs and
hams.

XXXVI.

And from the Mearnshire, and from Aberdeen,
Where knit by many a wench is many a stocking ;
From Banff and Murray, where of old were seen
The witches by the chief so fain to grow king,
Descend, in neckless coats brush'd smooth and clean,
And eke with long pipes in their mouths a-smoking,
The northern people, boisterous and rough,
Bearing both chin and nose bedaub'd with spilth of
snuff.

XXXVII.

Comes next from Ross-shire and from Sutherland
The horny-knuckl'd kilted Highlandman :
From where upon the rocky Caithness strand
Breaks the long wave that at the Pole began,
And where Lochfine from her prolific sand
Her herrings gives to feed each bord'ring clan,
Arrive the brogue-shod men of gen'rous eye,
Plaided and breechless all, with Esau's hairy thigh.

XXXVIII.

They come not now to fire the Lowland stacks,
Or foray on the banks of Fortha's firth ;
Claymore and broad-sword, and Lochaber-axe,
Are left to rust above the smoky hearth ;
Their only arms are bagpipes now, and sacks,
Their teeth are set most desp'rately for mirth ;
And at their broad and sturdy backs are hung
Great wallets, cramm'd with cheese and bannocks and
cold tongue.

XXXIX.

Nor staid away the Islanders, that lie
To buffet of th' Atlantic surge exposed ;
From Jura, Arran, Barra, Uist, and Skye,
Piping they come, unshav'd, unbreech'd, unhos'd ;
And from that Isle, whose abbey, structur'd high,
Within its precincts holds dead kings enclosed,
Where St Columba oft is seen to waddle,
Gown'd round with flaming fire, upon the spire astraddle.

XL.

Next from the far-fam'd ancient town of Ayr,
(Sweet Ayr ! with crops of ruddy damsels blest,
That, shooting up, and waxing fat and fair,
Shine on thy braes the lilies of the West ;)
And from Dumfries, and from Kilmarnock (where
Are night-caps made, the cheapest and the best)
Blithely they ride on ass and mule, with sacks
In lieu of saddles plac'd upon their asses' backs.

XLI.

Close at their heels, bestriding well-trapp'd nag,
Or humbly riding ass's backbone bare,
Come Glasgow merchants, each with money-bag,
To purchase Dutch lintseed at ANSTER FAIR—
Sagacious fellows all, who well may brag
Of virtuous industry and talents rare ;
Th' accomplish'd men o' the counting-room confest,
And fit to crack a joke or argue with the best.

XLII.

Nor keep their homes the Borderers, that stay
Where purls the Jed, and Esk, and little Liddel,
Men that can rarely on the bagpipe play,
And wake th' unsober spirit of the fiddle ;
Avow'd freebooters, that have many a day
Stol'n sheep and cow, yet never own'd they did ill ;
Great rogues, for sure that wight is but a rogue,
Who blots the eighth command from Moses' decalogue.

XLIII.

And some of them in sloop of tarry side,
Come from North-Berwick harbour sailing out ;
Others, abhorrent of the sick'ning tide,
Have ta'en the road by Stirling brig about,
And eastward now from long Kirkcaldy ride,
Slugging on their slow-gaited asses stout,
While, dangling at their backs are bagpipes hung,
And, dangling hangs a tale on ev'ry rhymers' tongue.

XLIV.

Amid them rides, on lofty ass sublime,
With cadger-like sobriety of canter,
In purple lustihood of youthful prime,
Great in his future glory, ROB THE RANTER ;
(I give the man what name in little time
He shall acquire from pipe and drone and chanter ;)
He comes apparell'd like a trim bridegroom,
Fiery and flush'd with hope, and like a god in bloom.

XLV.

No paltry vagrant piper-carle is he,
Whose base-brib'd drone whiffs out its wind for hire,
Who, having stroll'd all day for penny fee,
Couches at night with oxen in the byre ;
ROB is a Border laird of good degree,
A many-acred, clever jolly squire,
One born and shap'd to shine and make a figure,
And bless'd with supple limbs to jump with wondrous
vigour.

XLVI.

His waggish face, that speaks a soul jocose,
Seems cast in very mould of fun and glee,
And on the bridge of his well-archèd nose
Sits Laughter plum'd, and white-wing'd Jollity ;
His manly chest a breadth heroic shows
Bold is his gesture, dignified and free ;
Ev'n as he smites with lash his ass's hip,
'Tis with a seemly grace he whirls his glitt'ring whip.

XLVII.

His coat is of the flashy Lincoln green,
With silver buttons of the prettiest mould ;
Each buttonhole and skirt and hem is seen
Sparkishly edg'd with lace of yellow gold ;
His breeches of the velvet, smooth and clean,
Are very fair and goodly to behold ;
So on he rides, and let him e'en ride on,
We shall again meet ROB to-morrow at the Loan.

XLVIII.

But mark his ass ere off he ride ;—some say
He got him from a pilgrim lady fair,
Who, landing once on Joppa's wave-worn quay,
Had bought him of Armenian merchant there,
And prest his padded pack, and rode away
To snuff devotion in, with Syria's air ;
Then brought him home in hold of stout Levanter.
All for the great good luck of honest ROB THE RANTER.

XLIX.

Along Fife's western roads, behold, how hie
The travel-sweltry crowds to ANSTER Loan,
Shaded, o'erhead, with clouds of dust that fly
Tarnishing heav'n with darkness not its own !
And scarcely can the Muse's lynx-sharp eye
Scan, through the dusty nuisance upward blown,
The ruddy plaids, black hats, and bonnets blue,
Of those that rush below, a motley-vestured crew !

L.

Nor only is the land with crowds opprest,
That trample forward to th' expected Fair ;
The harass'd ocean has no peace or rest,
So many keels her foamy bosom tear ;
For, into view, now sailing from the west,
With streamers idling in the bluish air,
Appear the painted pleasure-boats unleaky,
Charg'd with a precious freight—the good folk of Auld
Reekie.

LI.

They come, the cream and flow'r of all the Scots,
The children of politeness, science, wit,
Exulting in their bench'd and gaudy boats,
Wherein some joking and some puking sit ;
Proudly the pageantry of carvels floats,
As if the salt sea frisk'd to carry it ;
The gales vie emulous their sails to wag,
And dally as in love with each long gilded flag.

LII.

Upon the benches seated, I descry
Her gentry ; knights, and lairds, and long-nail'd fops ;
Her advocates and signet-writers sly ;
Her gen'rous merchants, faithful to their shops ;
Her lean-cheek'd tetchy critics, who, O fy !
Hard-retching, spue upon the sails and ropes ;
Her lovely ladies, with their lips like rubies ;
Her fiddlers, fuddlers, fools, bards, blockheads, black-
guards, boobies.

LIII.

And red-prow'd fisher-boats afar are spied
In south-east, tilting o'er the jasper main,
Whose wing-like oars, dispread on either side,
Now swoop on sea, now rise in sky again :
They come not now, with herring-nets supplied,
Or barbèd lines to twitch the haddock train,
But with the townsfolk of Dunbar are laden,
Who burn to see the Fair—man, stripling, wife and
maiden.

LIV.

And many a Dane, with ringlets long and red,
And many a starv'd Norwegian, lank and brown,
(For over seas the fame of MAG had spread
Afar, from Scandinavian town to town,)
Maugre the risk of drowning, and the dread
Of *krakens*, isles of fish of droll renown,
Have dar'd to cross the ocean, and now steer
Their long outlandish skiffs direct on ANSTER pier.

LV.

Forward they scud ; and soon each pleasure-barge,
And fisher-boat, and skiff so slim and lax,
On shore their various passengers discharge,
Some hungry, queasy some and white as flax ;
Lightly they bound upon the beach's verge,
Glad to unbend their stiffen'd houghs and backs :
But who is that, O Muse ! with lofty brow,
That from his lacker'd boat is just forth stepping now ?

LVI.

"Thou fool ! (for I have ne'er since Bavius' days
Had such a dolt to dictate to as thou),
Dost thou not know by that eye's kingly rays,
And by the arch of that celestial brow,
And by the grace his ev'ry step displays,
And by the crowds that round him duck and bow,
That that is good King James, the merriest Monarch
That ever sceptre swayed since Noah steer'd his own
ark !

LVII.

For, as he in his house of Holyrood
Of late was keeping jovially his court,
The gipsey Fame beside his window stood,
And hollo'd in his ear fair MAG's report :
The Monarch laugh'd, for to his gamesome mood
Accorded well th' anticipated sport ;
So here he comes with lord and lady near,
Stepping with regal stride up ANSTER'S eastern pier.

LVIII.

But mark you, boy, how in a loyal ring
(As does obedient subjects well become)
Fife's hospitable lairds salute their King,
And kiss his little finger or his thumb ;
That done, their liege lord they escorting bring
To ANSTER HOUSE, that he may eat a crumb ;
Where in the stucco'd hall they sit and dine,
And into tenfold joy bedrench their blood with wine."

LIX.

Some with the ladies in the chambers ply
Their bounding elasticity of heel,
Evolving, as they trip it whirlingly,
The merry mazes of th' entangl'd reel ;
'Tween roof and floor, they fling, they flirt, they fly,
Their garments swimming round them as they wheel ;
The rafters creek beneath the dance's clatter ;
Tremble the solid walls with feet that shake and patter.

LX.

Some (wiser they) resolv'd on drinking-bout,
The wines of good Sir John englut amain ;
Their glasses soon are fill'd, and soon drunk out,
And soon are bumper'd to the brim again :
Certes, that laird is but a foolish lout,
Who does not fuddle now with might and main ;
For gen'rous is their host, and, by my sooth,
Was never better wine applied to Scottish mouth.

LXI.

With might and main they fuddle and carouse ;
Each glass augments their thirst, and keens their wit ;
They swill, they swig, they take a hearty rouse,
Cheering their flesh with Bacchus' benefit,
Till, by and by, the windows of the house
Go dizzily whirling round them where they sit ;
And had you seen the sport, and heard the laughing,
You'd thought that all Jove's gods in ANSTER House
sat quaffing.

LXII.

Not such a wassail, fam'd for social glee,
In Shushan's gardens long ago was held,
When Ahasuerus, by a blithe decree,
His turban'd satraps to the bouse compell'd,
And bagg'd their Persian paunches with a sea
Of wine, that from his carvèd gold they swill'd,
Whilst overhead was stretch'd (a gorgeous show !)
Blue blankets, silver-starr'd—a heav'n of calico !

LXIII.

Nor less is the disport and joy without,
In ANSTER town and Loan, through all the throng :
'Tis but one vast tumultuous jovial rout,
Tumult of laughing and of gabbling strong ;
Thousands and tens of thousands reel about,
With joyous uproar blustering along ;
Elbows push boringly on sides with pain,
Wives hustling come on wives, and men dash hard on
men.

LXIV.

There lacks no sport : tumblers in wondrous pranks,
High stag'd, display their limbs' agility ;
And now, they, mountant from the scaffold's planks,
Kick with their whirling heels the clouds on high,
And now, like cat, upon their dexterous shanks,
They light, and of new monsters cheat the sky ;
Whilst motley Merry-Andrew, with his jokes,
Wide through the incorp'rate mob the bursting laugh
provokes.

LXV.

Others upon the green, in open air,
Enact the best of Davie Lindsay's plays ;
While ballad-singing women do not spare
Their throats to give good utt'rance to their lays ;
And many a leather-lung'd co-chanting pair
Of wood-legg'd sailors, children's laugh and gaze,
Lift to the courts of Jove their voices loud,
Y-hymning their mishaps, to please the heedless crowd.

LXVI.

Meanwhile the sun, fatigued (as well he may)
With shining on a night till seven o'clock,
Beams on each chimney-head a farewell ray,
Illuming into golden shaft its smoke ;
And now in sea, far west from Oronsay,
Is dipp'd his chariot-wheel's refulgent spoke,
And now a section of his face appears,
And, diving, now he ducks clean down o'er head and
ears.

LXVII.

Anon uprises, with blithe bagpipe's sound,
And shriller din of flying fiddlestick,
On the green loan and meadow-crofts around,
A town of tents, with blankets roofèd quick :
A thousand stakes are rooted in the ground ;
A thousand hammers clank and clatter thick ;
A thousand fiddles squeak and squeal it yare ;
A thousand stormy drones out-gasp in groans their air.

LXVIII.

And such a turbulence of general mirth
Rises from ANSTER Loan upon the sky,
That from his throne Jove starts, and down on earth
Looks, wond'ring what may be the jollity :
He rests his eye on shores of Fortha's Firth,
And smirks, as knowing well the Market nigh,
And bids his gods and goddesses look down,
To mark the rage of joy that maddens ANSTER town.

LXIX.

From Cellardyke to wind-swept Pittenweem,
And from Balhouffie to Kilrennymill,
Vaulted with blankets, crofts and meadows seem,
So many tents the grassy spaces fill ;
Meantime the Moon, yet leaning on the stream,
With fluid silver bathes the welkin chill,
That now earth's ball, upon the side of night,
Swims in an argent sea of beautiful moonlight.

LXX.

Then to his bed full many a man retires,
On plume, or chaff, or straw, to get a nap,
In houses, tents, in haylofts, stables, byres,
And or without, or with, a warm night-cap :
Yet sleep not all ; for by the social fires
Sit many, cuddling round their toddy-sap,
And ever and anon they eat a lunch,
And rinse the mouthfuls down with flav'rous whisky
punch.

LXXI.

Some shuffling paper nothings, keenly read
The Devil's maxims in his painted books,
Till the old serpent in each heart and head
Spits canker, and with wormwood sours their looks ;
Some o'er the chess-board's chequer'd champaign lead
There inch-tall bishops, kings, and queens, and rooks ;
Some force, t' enclose the Tod, the wooden Lamb on ;
Some shake the pelting dice upon the broad back-
gammon.

LXXII.

Others, of travell'd elegance, polite,
With mingling music MAGGIE'S house surround,
And serenade her all the live-long night
With song and lyre, and flute's enchanting sound,
Chiming and hymning into fond delight
The heavy night air that o'ershades the ground ;
While she, right pensive, in her chamber-nook
Sits pond'ring on th' advice of little Tommy Puck.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

I WISH I had a cottage snug and neat
Upon the top of many-fountain'd Ide,
That I might thence in holy fervour greet
The bright-gown'd Morning tripping up her side :
And when the low Sun's glory-buskin'd feet
Walk on the blue wave of th' Ægean tide,
Oh I would kneel me down, and worship there
The God who garnish'd out a world so bright and fair !

II.

The saffron-elbow'd Morning up the slope
Of heav'n canaries in her jewell'd shoes,
And throws o'er Kelly-law's sheep-nibbled top
Her golden apron dripping kindly dew ;
And never, since she first began to hop
Up heav'n's blue causeway, of her beams profuse,
Shone there a dawn so glorious and so gay,
As shines the merry dawn of ANSTER Market-day.

III.

Round through the vast circumference of sky
Scarce can the eye one speck of cloud behold,
Save in the East some fleeces bright of dye,
That hem the rim of heav'n with woolly gold,
Whereon are happy angels wont to lie
Lolling, in amaranthine flow'rs enroll'd,
That they may spy the precious light of God,
Flung from the blessed East o'er the fair Earth abroad.

IV.

The fair Earth laughs through all her boundless range,
Heaving her green hills high to greet the beam ;
City and village, steeple, cot, and grange,
Gilt as with nature's purest leaf-gold seem ;
The heaths and upland muirs, and fallows, change
Their barren brown into a ruddy gleam,
And, on ten thousand dew-bent leaves and sprays,
Twinkle ten thousand suns, and fling their petty rays.

V.

Up from their nests and fields of tender corn
Full merrily the little sky-larks spring,
And on their dew-bedabbled pinions borne,
Mount to the heaven's blue key-stone flickering ;
They turn their plume-soft bosoms to the morn,
And hail the genial light, and cheer'ly sing ;
Echo the gladsome hills and vallies round,
As all the bells of Fife ring loud and swell the sound.

VI.

For when the first up-sloping ray was flung
On ANSTER steeple's swallow-harb'ring top,
Its bell, and all the bells around were rung
Sonorous, jangling loud without a stop ;
For toilingly each bitter beadle swung,
Ev'n till he smok'd with sweat, his greasy rope,
And almost broke his bell-wheel, ush'ring in
The morn of ANSTER FAIR, with tinkle-tankling din.

VII.

And, from our steeple's pinnacle outspread,
The town's long colours flare and flap on high,
Whose anchor, blazon'd fair in green and red,
Curls, pliant to each breeze that whistles by ;
Whilst on the boltsprit, stern, and topmast-head
Of brig and sloop that in the barbour lie,
Streams the red gaudery of flags in air,
All to salute and grace the morn of ANSTER FAIR.

VIII.

Forthwith from house and cellar, tent and byre,
Rous'd by the clink of bells that jingle on,
Uncabin'd, rush the multitude like fire,
Furious, and squeezing forward to the Loan ;
The son, impatient, leaves his snail-slow sire ;
The daughter leaves her mam to trot alone,
So madly leap they, man, wife, girl and boy,
As if the senseless Earth they kick'd for very joy.

IX.

And such the noise of feet that trampling pass,
And tongues that roar and rap from jaw to jaw,
As if ten thousand chariots, wheel'd with brass,
Came hurling down the sides of Largo-law ;
And such the number of the people was,
As when at end of Autumn, chill and raw,
His small clouds Eurus sends, a vap'ry train,
Streaming in scatter'd rack, exhaustless, from the main.

X.

For who, like arrant slugs can keep their heads
In contact with their pillows, now, unstirr'd ?
Grandfathers leave their all-year rump'l'd beds,
With moth-eat breeches now their loins to gird,
And, drawn abroad on tumbrels and on sleds
Chat off their years, and sing like vernal bird ;
Men, whom cold agues into leanness freeze,
Imblanketed walk out, and snuff the kindly breeze.

XI.

And grey-haired dames, on whose old arms and cheeks
The spoiler Time hath driv'n his furrowing plough,
Whose cold dry bones have all the winter weeks
Hung shiv'ring o'er their chimney's peat-fed glow,
Now warm and flexible, and lithe as leeks,
Wabblingly walk to see the joyous show ;
What wonder ? when each brick and pavement stone
Wish'd it had feet that day to walk to ANSTER Loan !

XII.

Upon a little dappled nag, whose mane
Seem'd to have robb'd the steeds of Phaeton,
Whose bit, and pad, and fairly-fashion'd rein,
With silvery adornments richly shone,
Came MAGGIE LAUDER forth, enwheel'd with train
Of knights and lairds around her trotting on :
At James' right hand she rode, a beauteous bride,
That well deserv'd to go by haughtiest Monarch's side.

XIII.

Her form was as the Morning's blithesome star,
That, capp'd with lustrous coronet of beams,
Rides up the dawning orient in her car,
New-wash'd, and doubly fulgent from the streams—
The Chaldee shepherd eyes her light afar,
And on his knees adores her as she gleams ;
So shone the stately form of MAGGIE LAUDER,
And so th'admiring crowds pay homage, and applaud
her.

XIV.

Each little step her trampling palfrey took
Shak'd her majestic person into grace,
And, as at times, his glossy sides she strook
Endearingly with whip's green silken lace
(The prancer seem'd to court such kind rebuke,
Loitering with faithful tardiness of pace) ;
By Jove, the very waving of her arm
Had pow'r a brutish lout t'unbrutify and charm !

XV.

Her face was as the summer cloud, whereon
The dawning sun delights to rest his rays ;
Compar'd with it, old Sharon's vale, o'ergrown
With flaunting roses, had resign'd its praise ;
For why ? Her face with Heaven's own roses shone,
Mocking the morn, and witching men to gaze ;
And he that gaz'd with cold unsmitten soul,
That blockhead's heart was ice hewn out beneath the
Pole.

XVI.

Her locks, apparent tufts of wiry gold,
Lay on her lily temples, fairly dangling,
And on each hair, so harmless to behold,
A lover's soul hung mercilessly strangling ;
The piping silly zephyrs vied t' infold
The tresses in their arms so slim and tangling,
And thrid in sport those lover-noosing snares,
Playing at hide-and-seek amid the golden hairs.

XVII.

Her eye was as an honour'd palace, where
A choir of lightsome Graces frisk and dance ;
What object drew her gaze, how mean soe'er,
Got dignity and honour from the glance ;
Woe to the man on whom, she, unaware,
Did the dear witch'ry of her eye elance !
'Twas such a thrilling, killing, keen regard—
May Heav'n from such a look preserve each tender
bard !

XVIII.

Beneath its shading tucker heav'd a breast
Fashion'd to take with ravishment mankind ;
For never did the flimsy Coan vest
Hide such a bosom in its gauze of wind ;
Ev'n a pure angel, looking, had confest
A sinless transport passing o'er his mind ;
For, in the nicest turning-loom of Jove,
Shap'd were those charming hills, t'inspire a holy love.

XIX.

So on she rode in virgin majesty,
Charming the thin dead air to kiss her lips,
And with the light and grandeur of her eye
Shaming the proud sun into dim eclipse ;
While round her presence, clust'ring, far and nigh,
On horseback some, with silver spurs and whips,
And some afoot with shoes of dazzling buckles,
Attended, knights, and lairds, and clowns with horny
knuckles.

XX.

Not with such crowd surrounded, nor so fair
In form, rode forth Semiramis of old,
On chariot where she sat in iv'ry chair
Beneath a sky of carbuncle and gold,
When to Euphrates' banks to take the air,
Or her new rising brick-walls to behold,
Abroad she drove, whilst round her wheels there pour'd
Satrap, and turban'd squire, and porsy Chaldee lord.



XXI.

Soon to the Loan came MAG, and from her pad
Dismounting with a queen-like dignity
(So from his buoyant cloud, man's heart to glad,
Lights a bright angel on a hill-top high),
On a small mound, with turfy greenness clad,
She lit, and walk'd, enchantment on the eye ;
Then on two chairs, that on its top stood ready,
Down sat the good King James, and ANSTER's bonny
Lady.

XXII.

Their chairs were finely carv'd, and overlaid
With the thin lustre of adorning gold,
And o'er their heads a canopy was spread
Of arras, flower'd with figures manifold,
Supported by four boys, of silver made,
Whose glitt'ring hands the vault of cloth uphold ;
On each side sat or stood, to view the sport,
Stout lord and lady fair, the flow'r of Scotland's court.

XXIII.

On their gilt chairs they scarce had time to sit,
When up rose, sudden, from th' applauding mob,
A shout enough to startle hell, and split
The roundness of the granite-ribb'd globe ;
The mews of May's steep islet, terror-smit,
Clang'd correspondent in a shrill hubbub,
And had the moon then hung above the main,
That horrid shout had crack'd her spotted orb in twain.

XXIV.

Thrice did their shouting make a little pause,
That so their lungs might draw recruiting air ;
Thrice did the stormy tumult of applause
Shake the Fife woods, and fright the foxes there ;
Sky rattled, and Kilbrachmont's crows and daws,
Alarm'd, sung hoarsely o'er their callow care :
Oh never, sure, in Fife's town-girdled shire,
Was heard, before or since, a shout so loud and dire !

XXV.

Nor ceas'd th' acclaim when ceas'd the sound of voice,
For fiddlesticks, in myriads, bick'ring fast,
Shreik'd on their shrunken guts a shrilling noise ;
And pipe, and drone, with whistle, and with blast,
Consorted, humm'd and squeak'd, and swell'd the joys
With furious harmony too high to last ;
And such a hum of pipe and drone was there,
As if men pip'd on earth, and devils dron'd in air.

XXVI.

Thus did the crowd, with fiddle, lungs, and drone,
Congratulate fair MAGGIE and their King,
Till at the last, wide-spreading round the Loan,
They form'd, of huge circumference, a ring,
Green space enclosing, bare of bush and stone,
Where might the asses run and suitors spring ;
Upon its southmost end, high chair'd, were seen
The Monarch and the Dame, pleased, looking o'er the
green.

XXVII.

Anon, the King's stout trumpeter blew loud,
Silence imposing on the rabble's roar ;
Silent as summer sky stood all the crowd—
Each bag was strangl'd and could snort no more
(So sinks the roaring of the foamy flood,
When Neptune's clarion twangs from shore to shore) ;
Then through his trump he bawl'd with such a stress,
One might have known his words a mile beyond
Crawness.

XXVIII.

" Ho ! hark ye, merry mortals ! hark ye, ho !
The King now speaks, nor what he speaks is vain ;
This day's amount of business well ye know,
So what ye know I will not tell again ;
He hopes your asses are more swift then doe ;
He hopes your sacks are strong as iron chain ;
He hopes your bags and pipes are swoln and screw'd ;
He hopes your rhyme-cramm'd brains are in a famous
mood.

XXIX.

For, verily, in ANSTER's beauteous Dame
Awaits the victor no despis'd reward ;
Sith well she merits that the starry frame
Should drop Apollo on that grassy sward,
That so he might, by clever jumping, claim
A fairer Daphne than whom once he marr'd ;
So fair is MAG : yet not her charms alone,
A present from the King, too, shall the victor own.

XXX.

For as a dow'r, along with MAGGIE's hand,
The monarch shall the conqueror present
With ten score acres of the royal land,
All good of soil, and of the highest rent ;
Near where Dunfermline's palace-turrets stand,
They stretch, array'd in wheat, their green extent ;
With such a gift the King shall crown to day,
The gen'rous toils of him who bears the prize away.

XXXI.

And he, prize-blest, shall enter MAGGIE's door,
Who shall in all the trials victor be ;
Or, if there hap no victor in the four,
He who shall shine and conquer in the three ;
But, should sly fortune give to two or more,
An equal chance in equal victory,
'Tis MAG'S of these to choose the dearest beau :—
So bring your asses in, bring in your asses, ho !”

XXXII.

Scarce from his clam'rous brass the words were blown,
When from the globe of people issued out
Donkeys in dozens, and in scores, that shone,
In purple some, and some in plainer clout,
With many a wag astraddle plac'd thereon,
Green-coated knight, and laird, and clumsy lout,
That one and all came burning with ambition,
To try their asses' speed in awkward competition.

XXXIII.

And some sat wielding silver-headed whips,
Whisking their asses' ears with silken thong ;
Some thrash'd and thwack'd their sturdy hairy hips,
With knotted cudgels ponderous and strong ;
And some had spurs, whose every rowel dips
Amid their ribs an inch of iron long ;
And some had bridles gay and bits of gold,
And some had hempen reins most shabby to behold.

XXXIV.

Amid them entered, on the listed space,
Great ROB (the RANTER was his after name),
With Fun's broad ensign hoisted in his face,
And aug'ring to himself immortal fame ;
And aye, upon the hillock's loftier place,
Where sat his destin'd spouse, the blooming dame,
A glance he flung, regardless of the reins,
And felt the rapid love glide tingling through his veins.

XXXV.

She, too, upon the Bord'rer's manly size
With prepossessing favour fix'd her sight ;
For woman's sharp and well-observing eyes
Soon single out the seemliest, stateliest wight ;
"And, oh !" (she to herself thus silent sighs)
"Were't but the will of Puck the dapper sprite,
I could—La ! what a grace of form divine !—
I could, in sooth, submit to lose my name in thine !

XXXVI.

Forward they rode, to where the King and MAG
O'erlook'd, superior, from the southern mound,
When, from his brute alighting, every wag,
His person hunch'd into a bow profound,
And almost kiss'd his shoes' bedusted tag,
Grazing with nose most loyally the ground,
As earthward crook'd they their corporeal frames
Into obeisance due, before the gracious James.

XXXVII.

"Rise, rise, my lads," the jovial monarch said,
"Here is not now the fitting place to ply
The courtier's and the dancing-master's trade,
Nuzzling the nasty ground obsequiously;
Up, up—put hat and bonnet upon head—
The chilling dew still drizzles from the sky;
Up—tuck your coats succinct around your bellies;
Mount, mount your asses' backs like clever vaulting
fellows.

XXXVIII.

And see, that, when the race's sign is giv'n,
Each rider whirl his whip with swingeing might,
Or toss his whizzing cudgel up to heav'n,
That with more goodly bang it down may light;
And let the spur's blood-thirsty teeth be driv'n
Through hide and hair by either heel aright,
For 'tis a beast most sluggish, sour, and slow;—
Be mounting then, my hearts, and range ye in a row.

XXXIX.

And look ye northwards—note yon mastlike pole
Tassel'd with ribbons and betrimm'd with clout ;
Yon—mark it—is the race-ground's northern goal,
Where you must turn your asses' heads about,
And jerk them southward, till with gladsome soul
You reach that spot whence now you're setting out ;
And he that reaches first shall loud be shouted
The happy, happy man—I'll say no more about it."

XL.

This said, they like the glimpse of lightning quick,
Upvaulted on their backbones asinine,
And marshall'd, by the force of spur and stick,
The long-ear'd lubbards in an even line :
Then sat, awaiting that momentous nick
When James's herald should y-twang the sign :
Each whip was rear'd aloft in act to crack,
Each cudgel hung in sky surcharged with stormy
thwack.

XLI.

Frisk'd with impatient flutter every heart,
As the brisk anxious blood began to jump ;
Each human ear prick'd up its fleshiest part,
To catch the earliest notice of the trump ;
When hark ! with blast that spoke the sign to start,
The brass-toned clarion gave the air a thump,
Whoop—off they go ; halloo—they shoot—they fly !
They spur—they whip—they crack—they bawl— they
curse—they cry !

XLII.

A hundred whips, high-toss'd in ether, sung
Tempestuous, flirting up and down like fire;
'Tween sky and earth as many cudgels swung
Their gnarlèd lengths in formidable gyre,
And, hissing, from their farther ends down flung
A storm of wooden bangs and anguish dire;
Woe to the beastly ribs, and skulls, and backs,
Foredoom'd to bear the weight of such unwieldy cracks!

XLIII.

Woe to the beastly bowels, doom'd alas!
To bear the spur's sharp steely agony;
For through the sore-gall'd hide of every ass
Squirts the vext blood in gush of scarlet dye,
While as they slug along the hoof-crush'd grass,
Rises a bray so horrid and so high,
As if all Bashan's bulls, with fat o'ergrown,
Had bellow'd on the green of ANSTER'S frighted Loan.

XLIV.

Who can in silly pithless words paint well
The pithy feats of that laborious race?
Who can the cudgellings and whippings tell,
The hurry, emulation, joy, disgrace?
'Twould take for tongue the clapper of a bell,
To speak the total wonders of the chase;
'Twould need a set of sturdy brassy lungs,
To tell the mangled whips, and shatter'd sticks and
rungs.

XLV.

Each rider pushes on to be the first,
Nor has he now an eye to look behind ;
One ass trots smartly on, though like to burst
With bounding blood and scantiness of wind ;
Another, by his master bann'd and cursed,
Goes backward through perversity of mind,
Inching along in motion retrograde,
Contrarious to the course which Scotland's Monarch
bade.

XLVI.

A third obdurate stands and cudgel-proof,
And steadfast as th' unchisel'd rock of flint,
Regardless though the heaven's high marble roof
Should fall upon his skull with mortal dint,
Or though conspiring earth, beneath his hoof,
Should sprout up coal with fiery flashes in't,
Whilst on his back his griev'd and waspish master,
The stubbornner he stands, still bangs and bans the
faster.

XLVII.

Meantime, the rabblement, with fav'ring shout,
And clapping hand, set up so loud a din,
As almost with stark terror frightened out
Each ass's soul from his partic'lar skin ;
Rattled the bursts of laughter round about,
Grinn'd every phiz with mirth's peculiar grin,
As through the Loan they saw the cuddies awkward
Bustling, some straight, some thwart, some forward, and
some backward.

XLVIII.

As when the clouds, by gusty whirlwind riv'n,
And whipp'd into confusion pitchy-black,
Detach'd, fly diverse round the cope of heav'n,
Reeling and jostling in uncertain rack,
And some are northward, some are southward driv'n,
With storm embroiling all the zodiac,
Till the clash'd clouds send out the fiery flash,
And peals, with awful roll, the long loud thunder crash.

XLIX.

Just in such foul confusion and alarm
Jostle the cuddies with rebellious mind,
All drench'd with sweat, internally so warm,
They loudly pray before, and belch behind :
But who is yon, the foremost of the swarm,
That scampers fleetly as the rushing wind ?
'Tis ROBERT SCOTT, if I can trust my een ;
I know the Borderer well, by his long coat of green !

L.

See how his bright whip brandish'd round his head,
Flickers like streamer in the northern skies !
See how his ass on earth with nimble tread
Half-flying rides, in air half-riding flies,
As if a pair of ostrich wings, outspread,
To help him on, had sprouted from his thighs :
Well scamper'd ROB, well whipt, well spurr'd, my boy !
O haste ye, RANTER, haste—rush—gallop to thy joy !

LI.

The pole is gain'd ; his ass's head he turns
Southward, to tread the trodden ground again ;
Sparkles like flint the cuddly's hoof, and burns,
Seeming to leave a smoke upon the plain ;
His bitted mouth the foam impatient churns ;
Sweeps his broad tail behind him like a train ;
Speed, cuddy, speed—Oh, slacken not thy pace !
Ten minutes more like this, and thou shalt gain the
race !

LII.

He comes careering on the sounding Loan,
With pace unslacken'd hast'ning to the knoll,
And as he meets with those that hobble on
With northward heads to gain the ribbon'd pole,
Ev'n by his forceful fury are o'erthrown
His long-ear'd brethren in confusion droll ;
For as their sides, he passing, slightly grazes,
By that collision shock'd, down roll the founder'd asses.

LIII.

Heels over head they tumble ; ass on ass
They dash, and twenty times roll o'er and o'er,
Lubberly wallowing along the grass,
In beastly ruin and with beastly roar ;
While their vexed riders in poor plight, alas !
Flung from their saddles three long ells and more,
Bruis'd and commingl'd, with their cuddies sprawl,
Cursing th' impetuous brute whose conflict caus'd their
fall.

LIV.

With hats upon their heads they down did light,
Withouten hats disgracefully they rose ;
Clean were their faces ere they fell and bright,
But dirty-fac'd they got up on their toes ;
Strong were their sinews ere they fell, and tight,
Hip-shot they stood up, sprain'd with many woes ;
Blithe were their aspects ere the ground they took,
Grim louting rose they up, with crabbed ghastful look.

LV.

Ah ! then with grievous limp along the ground,
They sought their hats that had so flown away,
And some were, cuff'd and much disaster'd, found,
And haply some not found unto this day :
Meanwhile, with vast and undiminished bound,
Sheer through the bestial wreck and disarray,
The brute of Mesopotam hurries on,
And in his madding speed devours the trembling Loan.

LVI.

Speed, cuddie, speed—one short, short minute more,
And finished is thy toil, and won the race !
Now, one half minute and thy toils are o'er—
His toils are o'er and he has gain'd the base !
He shakes his tail, the conscious conqueror ;
Joy peeps through his stupidity of face ;
He seems to wait the Monarch's approbation,
As quiver his long ears with self-congratulation.

LVII.

Straight from the stirrup ROB dislodg'd his feet,
And, flinging from his grasp away the rein,
Off sprung, and, louting in obeisance meet,
Did lowly duty to his King again :
His King with salutation kind did greet
Him the victorious champion of the plain,
And bade him rise, and up the hillock skip,
That he the royal hand might kiss with favour'd lip.

LVIII.

Whereat, obedient to the high command,
Great ROBERT SCOTT, upbolting from the ground,
Rush'd up, in majesty of gesture grand,
To where the Monarch sat upon the mound,
And kiss'd the hard back of his hairy hand,
Respectfully, as fits a Monarch crown'd ;
But with a keener ecstasy he kiss'd
The dearer, tend'rer back of MAGGIE'S downy fist.

LIX.

Then took the trumpeter his clarion good,
And, in a sharp and violent exclaim,
Out from the brass among the multitude,
Afar sent conqu'ring ROB'S illustrious name ;
Which heard, an outcry of applause ensued,
That shook the dank dew from the starry frame ;
Great ROBERT'S name was halloo'd through the mob,
And Echo blabb'd to heav'n the name of mighty ROB.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

O THAT my noddle were a seething kettle,
Frothing with bombast o'er the Muse's fire!
O that my wit were sharper than a nettle!
O that with shrill swan-guts were strung my lyre!
So would I rant and sing with such a mettle,
That each old wife in Fife's full-peopled shire,
Should, Maenad-like, spring from her spinning-wheel,
And frolic round her bard, and wince a tott'ring reel!

II.

Again, the herald at the King's desire,
His tube of metal to his mouth applied,
And, with a roysting brazen clangour dire,
Round to the heaving mass of rabble cried,
Inviting every blade of fun and fire,
That wish'd to jump in hempen bondage tied,
Forthwith, to start from out the people's ring,
And fetch his sack in hand, and stand before the King.

III.

No sooner in the sky his words were blown,
Than through the multitude's compacted press,
Wedging their bodies, push to th' open Loan
Th' audacious men of boasted springiness;
Some, Sampson-thigh'd, and large and big of bone,
Brawn-burden'd, six feet high or little less,
Some, lean, flesh-wither'd, stinted, oatmeal things,
Yet hardy, tough, and smart, with heels like steely
springs.

IV.

Nor were the offer'd candidates a few;
In hundreds forth they issue, mad with zeal
To try, in feats which haply some shall rue,
Their perilous alacrity of heel;
Each mortal brings his sack wherein to mew
As in a pliant prison, strong as steel,
His guiltless corse, and clog his nat'ral gait
With cumbrance of cloth, embarrassing and strait.

V.

And in their hands they hold to view on high,
Vain-gloriously, their bags of sturdy thread,
And toss and wave them in th' affronted sky,
Like honour-winning trophies o'er their head,
Assuming merit, that they dare defy
The dangers of a race so droll and dread:
Ah, boast not, sirs, for premature's the brag;
'Tis time, in troth, to boast when you put off the bag!

VI.

Onward they hasten'd, clamorous and loud,
To where the Monarch sat upon the knoll,
And, having to his presence humbly bow'd,
And bared of reverential hat their poll,
Their dirty sacks they wagg'd, erect and proud,
Impatient, in their fiery fit of soul,
And pertly shak'd, ev'n in the Monarch's eyes,
A cloud of meal and flour that whirling round them flies.

VII.

But as the good King saw them thus prepar'd
To have their persons scabbarded in cloth,
He order'd twenty soldiers of his guard,
All swashing fellows, and of biggest growth,
To step upon the green Loan's listed sward,
That they may lend assistance, nothing loath,
To plunge into their pliant sheaths, neck-deep,
Th' ambitious men that dare to try such vent'rous leap.

VIII.

They stepp'd obedient down, and in a trice
Put on the suitors' comical array;
Each sack gap'd wide its monstrous orifice,
To swallow to the neck its living prey;
And as a swineherd puts in poke a grice,
To carry from its sty some little way,
So did the soldiers plunge the men within
Their yawning gloomy gulfs, ev'n to the neck and chin.

IX.

As when of yore the Roman forum, split
By earthquake, yawn'd a black tremendous hole,
Voracious, deep'ning still, though flung in it
Were stones and trees with all their branches whole,
Till, in a noble patriotic fit,
The younker Curtius, of devoted soul,
Down headlong yarely gallop'd, horse and all,
And dash'd his gallant bones to atoms by the fall :

X.

So fearlessly these men of fair Scotland
(Though not to death) down plung'd into their sacks,
Entailing into impotence to stand,
Their feet and mobbling legs, and sides and backs,
Till tightly drawn was every twisted band,
And knotted firmly round their valiant necks,
That, in their rival rage to jump forthright,
They might not struggle off their case of sackcloth tight.

XI.

Nor, when their bodies were accoutred well,
Upon their cumber'd feet stood all upright,
But some, unpractis'd or uncautious, fell
Sousing with lumpish undefended weight,
And roll'd upon the turf full many an ell,
Incapable of uprise, sad in plight ;
Till, rais'd again, with those that keep their feet,
Join'd in a line they stand, each in his winding-sheet.

XII.

O 'twas an awkward and ridic'ulous show,
To see a long sack-muffl'd line of men,
With hatless heads all peeping in a row
Forth from the long smocks that their limbs contain !
For in the wide abyss of cloth below,
Their legs are swallow'd and their stout arms, twain ;
From chin to toe one shapeless lump they stand,
In clumsy uniform, without leg, arm, or hand.

XIII.

And such their odd appearance was, and show
Of human carcasses in sackcloth dight,
As when the trav'ller, when he haps to go
Down to Grand Cairo in the Turk's despite,
Sees in her chamber'd catacombs below
Full many a mummy horribly upright,
A grisly row of grimly-garnish'd dead,
That seem to pout, and scowl, and shake the brainless
head.

XIV.

So queer and so grotesque to view they stood,
All ready at the trump's expected sound,
To take a spring of monstrous altitude,
And scour with majesty of hop the ground :
Yet not so soon the starting-blast ensued ;
For, as they stand intent upon the bound,
The hum'rous Monarch, eyeing their array,
Gave them his good advice before they rush'd away.

XV.

“Good friends ! since now your loins are girt,” he cried,
“For journey perilous and full of toil,
Behoves it you right cautiously to guide
Your ticklish steps along such vexing soil ;
For perilous the road, and well supplied
With stumps, and stumbling-blocks, and pits of guile,
And snares, and latent traps with earth bestrown,
To catch you by the heels, and bring you groaning down.

XVI.

And woe betide, if unaware you hap
Your body’s well-adjusted poise to lose,
For bloody bump and sorrowful sore slap
Await your falling temple, brow and nose ;
And, when once down and fetter’d in a trap,
Hard task ’twill be to extricate your toes ;
So, lads, if you regard your noses’ weal,
Pray pick out stable steps, and tread with wary heel.

XVII.

And he that longest time without a fall
Shall urge his sad perplexity of way,
And leave behind his fellow-trav’lers all,
Growling for help and grovelling on the clay ;
He, for his laudable exertions, shall
Be sung the second victor of the day :
And so God speed you, sirs !” The Monarch spoke,
And on the surging air the trumpet’s signal brokè.

XVIII.

As when a thunderclap, preluding nigh
A storm, growls on the frontiers of the west,
Ere yet the cloud, slow toiling up the sky,
Hath in its mass the mid-day sun supprest,
Alarm'd the timid doves that basking lie
Upon their cot's slope sunny roof at rest,
At once up-flutter in a sudden fray,
And poise th' unsteady wing, and squir in air away :

XIX.

So started, as the herald gave the blast,
At once the suitors in their sacks away,
With gallant up-spring, notable and vast,
A neck-endang'ring violent assay :
The solid earth, as up to sky they past,
Push'd back, seem'd to retire a little way ;
And, as they up-flew furious from the ground,
The gash'd and wounded air whizz'd audibly a sound.

XX.

As when on summer eve a soaking rain
Hath after drought bedrench'd the tender grass,
If chance, in pleasant walk along the plain,
Brushing with foot the pearl-hung blades you pass,
A troop of frogs oft leaps from field of grain,
Marshall'd in line, a foul unseemly race,
They halt a space, then vaulting up they fly,
As if they long'd to sit on Iris' bow on high :

XXI.

So leap'd the men, half-sepulchred in sack,
Up-swinging, with their shapes be-monst'ring sky,
And coursed in air a semicircle track,
Like to the feath'ry-footed Mercury ;
Till, spent their impetus, with sounding thwack
Greeted their heels the green ground sturdily ;
And some, descending, kept their balance well,
Unbalanc'd some came down, and boisterously fell.

XXII.

The greeted earth beneath the heavy thwacks
Of feet that down centripetal alight,
Of tingling elbows, bruised loins and backs,
Shakes passive, yet indignant of the weight ;
For o'er her bosom, in their plaguy sacks,
Cumbrously roll (a mortifying sight !)
Wreck'd burgher, knight, and laird, and clown pell-mell,
Prostrate, in grievance hard, too terrible to tell.

XXIII.

And aye they struggle with an effort strong
To reinstate their feet upon the plain,
Half-elbowing, half-kneeing, sore and long
Abortively, with bitter sweat and pain,
Till, half upraised, they to their forehead's wrong
Go with a buffet rapping down again,
And sprawl and flounce, and wallow on their backs,
Crying aloud for help to ease them of their sacks.

XXIV.

Not in severer anguish of distress
The fabled giant under Etna lies,
Though rocks and tree-proud promontories press
With vengeance fitting Jove, his ruffian size ;
Wallowing supine beneath the mountain's stress,
Half-broil'd with brimstone ever hot, he fries,
And, as he turns his vasty carcass o'er,
Out-belches molten rocks, and groans a hideous roar.

XXV.

In such vexatious plight the mortals lie
Who founder'd on the threshold of the race,
Where let us leave them, and lift up our eye
To those that keep their feet and hop apace.—
Gramercy ! how they bounce it lustily,
Maugre their misery of woven case !
How with their luggage scour they o'er the Loan,
And toil, and moil, and strain, and sweat, and lumber on !

XXVI.

Strange thing it is that men so penn'd in clout,
So wound with swaddling-clothes, should trip it so !
See how with spring incomparably stout,
Spurning the nasty earth they upward go,
As if they wish'd t'unsocket and knock out
With poll the candles that i'the night-sky glow !
See how, attain'd the zenith of their leap,
Earthward they sink again with long descending sweep

XXVII.

They halt not still, again aloft they hop,
As if they tread the rainbow's gilded bend,
Again upon the quaking turf they drop,
Lighting majestic on their proper end ;
I ween, they do not make a moment's stop ;
Oh who may now his precious time misspend ?
'Tis bustling all and swelt'ring—but behold !
Swop ! there a jumper falls aflat upon the mould !

XXVIII.

How can his gylvèd arms be forward thrust
To break the downsway of his fall just now ?
Ah ! 'tis his tender nose alone that must
In loving-kindness save from bump his brow ;
His soft nose, to its site and duty just,
Is martyr'd to its loyalty, I trow,
For, flatten'd into anguish by the clod,
It weeps,—see how it weeps, warm trickling tears of
blood !

XXIX.

He bleeds, and from his nostrils' double sluice
Redly bedews the sod of ANSTER Loan,
Till, in a puddle of his own heart's juice,
He wel't'ring writhes with lamentable moan,
And sends his sack in curses to the deuce,
Banning the hour when first he put it on ;
Meanwhile, o'erlabour'd in their hobbling pother,
Douse ! drops a second down, and whap ! there sinks
another.

XXX.

Wearied, half-bursten with their hot turmoil,
Their lungs like Vulcan's bellows panting strong,
Pow'rless to stand, or prosecute their toil,
Successively they souse and roll along,
Till, round and round, the carcass cumber'd soil
Is strewn with havock of the jumping throng,
Who make a vain endeavour off to shuffle
The cruel sackcloth coil, that does their bodies muffle.

XXXI.

All in despair have sunk, save yonder two
Who still their perpendic'lar posture keep,
The only remnant of the jumping crew,
That urge their emulous persisting leap ;
Oddspittkins ! how with poise exactly true
Clean forward to the ribbon'd pole they sweep ;
I cannot say that one's before the other,
So equal, side by side, they plod along together.

XXXII.

The pole is gain'd, and to the glorious sun
They turn their sweaty faces round again ;
With inextinguishable rage to run,
Southward, unflagging and unquell'd, they strain.
What ! is not yonder face, where young-ey'd Fun
And Laughter seem enthron'd to hold their reign,
One seen before—ev'n ROB the Bord'rer's phiz ?
Ay, now I ken it well, by'r laking it is his !

XXXIII.

Haste, haste ye, ROB, half-hop, half-run, half-fly,
 Wriggle and wrestle in thy bag's despite;
So! shoot like cannon-bullet to the sky;
 So! stably down upon thy soles alight;
Up, up again, and fling it gallantly!
 Well flung, my ROB, thou art a clever wight;
'Sblood, now thy rival is a step before;
String, string thy sinews up, and jump three yards and
 more!

XXXIV.

'Tis done—but who is he that at thy side,
 Thy rival, vigorously marches so?
Declare, oh Muse, since thou art eagle-ey'd,
 And thine it is, ev'n at a glance, to know
Each son of mortal man, though mumm'd and tied
 In long disguising sack from chin to toe!
"He, boy, that marches in such clumsy state,
Is old Edina's child, a waggish Advocate.

XXXV.

For he too has for MAGGIE LAUDER dar'd
 To prove the mettle of his heel and shin,
A jolly wight, who trickishly prepar'd
 A treach'rous sack to scarf his body in;
A sack, whose bottom was with damp impair'd,
 Fusty, half-rotten, mouldy, frail, and thin,
That he, unseen, might in the race's pother,
Thrust out one helpful leg, and keep incag'd its brother.

XXXVI.

And seest thou not his right leg peeping out,
Enfranchis'd, trait'rously to help his gait,
Whilst th' other, still imprison'd in its clout,
Tardily follows its more active mate?"
I see it well—'tis treachery, no doubt;
Beshrew thee now, thou crafty Advocate!
Unfair, unfair! 'tis quite unfair, I say,
Thus with illicit leg to prop thy perilous way!

XXXVII.

Half-free, half-clogg'd, he steals his quick advance,
Nearing at each unlicens'd step the base,
Whilst honest ROBERT plies the harder dance,
Most faithful to his sack and to the race;
Now for it, ROB—another jump—but once—
And over-jumped is all th' allotted space;
By Jove, they both have reach'd the base together,
Gain'd is the starting-line, yet gained the race hath
neither!

XXXVIII.

At once they bend each man his body's frame
Into a bow before the King and MAG;
At once they ope their lips to double-claim
The race's palm (for now Auld Reekie's wag,
As snail draws in its horn, had, fy for shame!
Drawn his dishonest leg into his bag);
At once they plead the merits of their running,
Good ROB with proofs of force, the wag with quips and
punning.

XXXIX.

Me lists not now to variegate my song
With all his sophistry and quip and pun ;
Oh 'twould be tiresome, profitless, and long,
To quote his futile arguments, air-spun,
His oratoric tricks that dress the wrong
In garb of right, his gibes of naughty fun,
Quiddits and quillits that may well confound one,
And make a rotten sack appear a goodly sound one !

XL.

But ROBERT to the people's sight appeal'd,
And to the eyes of royal JAMES and MAG,
Who saw his rival's foot too plain reveal'd,
And impudently peering from its bag :
He said 'twas roguish thus to come a-field
With such a paltry hypocritic rag ;
The very hole through which his foot was thrust,
Gapes evidence to prove his claim is quite unjust.

XLI.

Long was the plea, and longer it had been,
Had not the populace begun aloud
T' express with clamour their resentment keen
At him who quibbl'd in his rotten shroud :
A thousand hands, uplifted high, were seen
Over the hats and bonnets of the crowd,
With paly hens' eggs that their fingers clench,
To hurl upon his sack conviction, slime, and stench.

XLII.

Which, when he saw all white upheld to view,
Ready to rattle shame about his ears,
He straightway the perplexing claim withdrew,
Urg'd to resign by his judicious fears ;
For had he but one minute staid or two,
He, for his subtilties, and quirks, and jeers,
Had reap'd a poor and pitiful reward,
And smell'd from head to foot—but not with Syrian
nard.

XLIII.

The monarch, then, well pleas'd that thus the mob
Had settl'd with prejudging voice the case,
Orders his trumpeter to blazon ROB,
Again, the winner of the second race :
The fellow blew each cheek into a globe,
And puff'd into deformity his face,
As to the top of heaven's empyreal frame
He, in a storm of breath, sent up the conqu'ror's name.

XLIV.

His name the rabble took ; from tongue to tongue
Bandi'd it flew like fiery-wingèd shot,
Till the blue atmosphere around them rung
With the blabb'd honours of great ROBERT SCOTT ;
Nor when they thus his triumph stoutly sung,
Were the race-founder'd gentlemen forgot,
That in their trammels still a-flound'ring lay,
And, had they not been rais'd, had lain there to this day.

XLV.

But soon uprear'd they were : the lads, that late
Had help'd their uncouth livery to don,
Now step upon the green, compassionate,
To free them from the house of dole and moan ;
The cords, that on their necks were knotted strait,
Are loos'd, and as they lie extended prone,
Of their long scabbards are discas'd the men,
And stand upon their feet, unclogg'd, and free agen.

XLVI.

They take no time (such shame the vanquish'd stung)
Each to snatch up his bag and bring it off ;
Away they start, and plunge amid the throng,
Glad their embarrassment of cloth to doff
(So shoots the serpent to the brake along,
And leaves to rot his cast despisèd slough) ;
Deep in the throng with elbows sharp they bore,
And fear contemptuous laugh and hateful egg no more.

XLVII.

But now the sun, in mid-day's gorgeous state,
Tow'rs on the summit of the lucid sky,
And human stomachs that were cramm'd of late,
Now empty, send their silent dinner-cry,
Demanding something wherewithal to sate
Their hunger, bread and beer, or penny-pie :
The crowd, obedient to the belly's call,
Begin to munch, and eat, and nibble, one and all.

XLVIII.

Some from their pockets, or their wallets, drew
Lumps of the roasted flesh of calf or lamb ;
Some ply their teeth-arm'd grinding jaws to chew
The tougher slices of the thirsty ham ;
Others with bits of green cheese nice and new
Ev'n to the throat their clownish bellies cram,
While horns of ale, from many a barrel fill'd,
Foam white with frothy rage, and soon are swigg'd and
swill'd.

XLIX.

JAMES, too, and MAG, and all the courtly train
Of lords and ladies round them, not a few,
With sugar'd biscuits sooth'd their stomachs' pain,
For courtly stomachs must be humour'd too ;
And from their throats to wash the dusty stain
That they had breath'd when from the sacks it flew,
A glass of wine they slipp'd within their clay,
And if they swallow'd twain, the wiser folk were they.

L.

Nor ceas'd the business of the day meanwhile ;
For as the Monarch chew'd his sav'ry cake,
The man whose lungs sustain the trumpet's toil,
Made haste again his noisy tube to take,
And with a cry, which, heard full many a mile,
Caus'd the young crows on Airdrie's trees to quake,
He bade the suitor-pipers to draw nigh,
That they might, round the knoll, their powers of piping
try.

LI.

Which, when the rabble heard, with sudden sound
They broke their circle's huge circumference,
And, crushing forward to the southern mound,
They push'd their many-headed shoal immense,
Diffusing to an equal depth around
Their mass of bodies wedg'd compact and dense,
That, standing nigher, they might better hear
The pipers squeaking loud to charm Miss MAGGIE's ear.

LII.

And soon the pipers, shouldering along
Through the close mob their squeez'd uneasy way,
Stood at the hillock's foot, an eager throng,
Each asking licence from the King to play ;
For with a tempest, turbulent and strong,
Labour'd their bags impatient of delay,
Heaving their bloated globes outrageously,
As if in pangs to give their contents to the sky.

LIII.

And every bag, thus full and tempest-ripe,
Beneath its arm lay ready to be prest,
And on the holes of each fair-polish'd pipe,
Each piper's fingers, long and white, were plac'd :
Fiercely they burn'd in jealous rivalry ;
Each madding piper scoff'd at all the rest,
And fleer'd, and toss'd contemptuously his head,
As if his skill alone deserv'd fair MAGGIE's bed.

LIV.

Nor could they wait, so piping-mad they were,
Till JAMES gave each man orders to begin ;
But in a moment they displode their air
In one tumultuous and unlicens'd din ;
Out flies, in storm of simultaneous blare,
The whizzing wind comprest their bags within,
And whiffing through the wooden tubes so small,
Growls gladness to be freed from such confining thrall.

LV.

Then rose, in burst of hideous symphony,
Of pibrochs and of tunes one mingled roar ;
Discordantly the pipes squeal'd sharp and high,
The drones alone in solemn concord snore ;
Five hundred fingers, twinkling funnily,
Play twiddling up and down on hole and bore,
Now passage to the shrilly wind denying,
And now a little rais'd to let it out a-sighing.

LVI.

Then rung the rocks and caves of Billyness,
Reverberating back that concert's sound,
And half the lurking Echoes that possess
The glens and hollows of the Fife ground ;
Their shadowy voices strain'd into excess
Of outcry, loud huzzaing round and round
To all the Dryads of Pitkirie wood,
That now, around their trees, they dance in frisky mood.



LVII.

As when the sportsman with report of gun,
Alarms the sea-fowls of the Isle of May,
Ten thousand mews and gulls that shade the sun
Come flapping down in terrible dismay,
And with a wild and barb'rous concert stun
His ears, and scream, and shriek, and wheel away ;
Scarce can the boatman hear his plashing oar ;
Yell caves and eyries all, and rings each Maian shore :

LVIII.

Just so around the knoll did pipe and drone
Whistle and hum a discord strange to hear,
Tort'ring with violence of shriek and groan,
Kingly, and courtly, and plebeian ear ;
And still the men had humm'd and whistl'd on,
Ev'n till each bag had burst its bloated sphere,
Had not the King, uprising, wav'd his hand,
And check'd the boist'rous din of the unmanner'd band.

LIX.

On one side of his face a laugh was seen,
On t'other side a half-form'd frown lay hid ;
He frown'd, because they, petulantly keen,
Set up their piping forward and unbid ;
He laugh'd, for who could have control'd his mien,
Hearing such crash of pibrochs, as he did ?
He bade them orderly the strife begin,
And play each man the tune wherewith the fair he'd
win.

- LX.

Whereat the pipers ceased their idle toil
Of windy music wild and deafening,
And made, too late (what they forgot erewhile),
A gen'ral bow to MAGGIE and their King ;
But as they vail'd their bare heads tow'rd the soil,
O then there happ'd a strange portentous thing,
Which had not good my Muse confirm'd for true,
Myself had not believed, far less have told to you.

LXI.

For lo ! whilst all their bodies yet were bent,
Breaks from the spotless blue of eastern sky
A globe of fire, (miraculous ostent !)
Bursten from some celestial cleft on high ;
And thrice in circle round the firmament
Trail'd its long light the gleamy prodigy,
Till on the ring of pipers down it came,
And set their pipes, and drones, and chanters in a flame.

LXII.

'Twas quick and sudden as th' electric shock—
One moment lighted and consumed them all ;
As is the green hair of the tufted oak
Scath'd into blackness by the fulmin'd ball ;
Or, as spark-kindled, into fire and smoke,
Flashes and fumes the nitrous grain so small,
So were their bagpipes, in a twink, like tinder
Fired underneath their arms, and burnt into a cinder.

LXIII.

Yet so innocuous was the sky-fall'n flame,
That, save their twangling instruments alone,
Unsing'd their other gear remain'd the same,
Ev'n to the nap that stuck their coats upon ;
Nor did they feel its heat, when down it came
On errand to destroy bag, pipe, and drone,
But stood in blank surprise, when to the ground
Dropt down in ashes black their furniture of sound.

LXIV.

Crest-fall'n they stood, confounded and distress,
And fix'd upon the turf their stupid look,
Conscious that Heav'n forbade them to contest,
By such a burning token of rebuke.
The rabble, too, its great alarm confest,
For every face the ruddy blood forsook,
As with their white, uprolling, ghastly eyes,
They spied the streaky light wheel whizzing from the
skies.

LXV.

And still, they to that spot of orient heav'n
Whence burst the shining globe, look up aghast,
Expecting, when th'empyrean pavement, riv'n,
A second splendour to the earth should cast ;
But when they saw no repetition giv'n,
Chang'd from alarm to noisy joy at last,
They set up such a mix'd tremendous shout,
As made the girdling heav'ns to bellow round about.

LXVI.

And such a crack and peal of laughter rose,
When the poor pipers bagpipeless they saw,
As when a flock of jetty-feather'd crows,
On winter morning, when the skies are raw,
Come from their woods in long and sooty rows,
And over ANSTER through their hoarse throats caw ;
The sleepy old wives, on their warm chaff-beds,
Up from their bolsters rear, afraid, their flannel'd
heads.

LXVII.

Then did th' affronted pipers slink away,
With faces fix'd on earth for very shame ;
For not one remnant of those pipes had they,
Wherewith they late so arrogantly came ;
But in a black and ashy ruin lay
Their glory moulder'd by the scathing flame ;
Yet in their hearts they cursed (and what the wonder ?)
That fire to which their pipes so quick were giv'n a
plunder.

LXVIII.

And scarce they off had slunk, when with a bound
Great ROBERT SCOTT sprung forth before the King ;
For he alone, when all the pipers round
Stood rang'd into their fire-devoted ring,
Had kept snug distance from the fated ground,
As if forewarn'd of that portentous thing ;
He stood and laugh'd, as underneath his arm
He held his bagpipe safe, unscath'd with fiery harm.

LXIX.

His hollow drone, with mouth wide-gaping, lay
Over his shoulder pointing to the sky,
Ready to spue its breath, and puff away
The lazy silver clouds that sit on high ;
His bag swell'd madly to begin the play,
And with its bowel-wind groan'd inwardly ;
Not higher heav'd the wind-bags which, of yore,
Ulysses got from him who rul'd th' Æolian shore.

LXX.

He thus the King with reverence bespoke :
"My Liege, since Heav'n with bagpipe-level'd fire
Hath turn'd my brethren's gear to dust and smoke,
And testified too glaringly its ire,
It fits me now, as yet my bagpipe's poke
Remains unsing'd, and every pipe entire,
To play my tune—O King ! with your good will—
And to the royal ear to prove my piping skill."

LXXI.

Nodded his Liege assent, and straightway bade
Him stand a-top o' th' hillock at his side ;
A-top he stood ; and first a bow he made
To all the crowd that shouted far and wide ;
Then, like a piper dext'rous at his trade,
His pipes to play adjusted and applied ;
Each finger rested on its proper bore ;
His arm appear'd half-raised to wake the bag's uproar.

LXXII.

A space he silent stood, and cast his eye
In meditation upwards to the pole,
As if he pray'd some fairy pow'r in sky
To guide his fingers right o'er bore and hole ;
Then pressing down his arm, he gracefully
Awak'd the merry bagpipe's slumb'ring soul,
And pip'd and blew, and play'd so sweet a tune,
As well might have unspher'd the reeling midnight
moon.

LXXIII.

His ev'ry finger, to its place assign'd,
Mov'd quiv'ring like the leaf of aspen tree,
Now shutting up the skittish squeaking wind,
Now op'ning to the music passage free ;
His cheeks, with windy puffs therein confin'd,
Were swoln into a red rotundity,
As from his lungs into the bag was blown
Supply of needful air to feed the growling drone.

LXXIV.

And such a potent tune did never greet
The drum of human ear with lively strain ;
So merry, that from dancing on his feet,
No man, undeaf, could stockishly refrain ;
So loud, 'twas heard a dozen miles complete,
Making old Echo pipe and hum again,
So sweet, that all the birds in air that fly,
Charm'd into new delight, come sailing through the sky.

LXXV.

Crow, sparrow, linnet, hawk, and white-wing'd dove,
Wheel in ærial jig o'er ANSTER Loan ;
The sea-mews from each Maian cleft and cove
O'er the deep sea come pinion-wafted on ;
The light-detesting bats now flap above,
Scaring the sun with wings to day unknown—
Round ROBERT'S head they dance, they cry, they sing,
Shearing the subtile sky with broad and playful wing.

LXXVI.

And eke the mermaids that in ocean swim,
Drawn by that music from their shelly caves,
Peep now unbashful from the salt sea brim,
And flounce and splash exulting in the waves ;
They spread at large the white and floating limb,
That Neptune amorously clips and laves,
And kem with combs of pearl and coral fair
Their long sleek oozy locks of green redundant hair.

LXXVII.

Nor was its influence less on human ear :
First from their gilded chairs up start at once
The royal JAMES and MAGGIE, seated near,
Enthusiastic both and mad to dance :
Her hand he snatch'd, and look'd a merry leer,
Then caper'd high in wild extravagance,
And on the grassy summit of the knoll,
Wagg'd each monarchical leg in galliard strange and droll.

LXXXVIII.

As when a sunbeam, from the waving face
Of well-fill'd water-pail reflected bright,
Varies upon the chamber-walls its place,
And, quiv'ring, tries to cheat and foil the sight ;
So quick did MAGGIE, with a nimble grace,
Skip patt'ring to and fro, alert and light,
And, with her noble colleague in the reel,
Haughtily toss'd her arms, and shook her glancing heel.

LXXXIX.

The Lords and Ladies next, who sat or stood
Near to the Piper and the King around,
Smitten with that contagious dancing mood,
'Gan hand in hand in high lavolt to bound,
And jigg'd it on as featly as they could,
Circling in sheeny rows the rising ground,
Each sworded Lord a Lady's soft palm griping,
And to his mettle rous'd at such unwonted piping.

LXXX.

Then did th' infectious hopping-mania seize
The circles of the crowd that stood more near,
Till, round and round, far spreading by degrees,
It madden'd all the Loan to kick and rear ;
Men, women, children, lilt and ramp, and squeeze,
Such fascination takes the gen'ral ear ;
Ev'n babes that at their mother's bosoms hung,
Their little willing limbs fantastically flung !

LXXXI.

And hoar-hair'd men and wives, whose marrow, age
Hath from their hollow bones suck'd out and drunk,
Canary in unconscionable rage,
Nor feel their sinews wither'd now and shrunk ;
Pell-mell in random couples they engage,
And boisterously wag feet, arms, and trunk,
As if they strove, in capering so brisk,
To heave their aged knees up to the solar disk.

LXXXII.

And cripples from beneath their shoulders fling
Their despicable crutches far away,
Then, yok'd with those of stouter limbs, up-spring
In hobbling merriment, uncouthly gay ;
And some on one leg stand y-gamboling ;
For why ? The other short and frail had they ;
Some, both whose legs distorted were and weak,
Dance on their poor knee-pans in mad preposterous
freak.

LXXXIII.

So on they trip, King, MAGGIE, Knight, and Earl,
Green-coated courtier, satin-snooded dame,
Old men and maidens, man, wife, boy, and girl,
The stiff, the supple, bandy-legg'd, and lame—
All suck'd and wrapt into the dance's whirl,
Inevitably witch'd within the same ;
Whilst ROB, far-seen, o'erlooks the huddling Loan,
Rejoices in his pipes, and squeals serenely on.

LXXXIV.

But such a whirling and a din there was,
Of bodies and of feet that heel'd the ground,
As when the Maelstrom in his craggy jaws
Engluts the Norway waves with hideous sound ;
In vain the black sea-monster plies his paws
'Gainst the strong eddy that impels him round ;
Rack'd and convuls'd, the ingorging surges roar,
And fret their frothy wrath, and reel from shore to
shore.

LXXXV.

So reel the mob, and with their feet up-cast
From the tramp'd soil a dry and dusty cloud,
That shades the huddling hurly-burly vast
From the warm sun as with an earthy shroud ;
Else, had the warm sun spied them wriggling fast,
He sure had laugh'd at such bewitched crowd,
For never, since heaven's baldric first he trod,
Was tripp'd such country dance beneath his fiery road.

LXXXVI.

Then was the shepherd, that on Largo-law
Sat idly whistling to his feeding flock,
Dismay'd, when, looking south-eastward, he saw
The dusty cloud more black than furnace-smoke ;
He lean'd his ear, and catch'd with trembling awe
The dance's sounds that th'ambient ether broke ;
He bless'd himself, and cried, " By sweet St John !
The devil hath got a job in ANSTER's dirty Loan."

LXXXVII.

At length the mighty Piper, honest ROB,
His wonder-working melody gave o'er,
When on a sudden all the flouncing mob
Their high commotion ceas'd, and toss'd no more ;
Trunk, arm, and leg, forgot to shake and bob,
That bobb'd and shak'd so parlously before ;
On ground, fatigu'd, the panting dancers fall,
Wond'ring what witch's craft had thus embroil'd them
all.

LXXXVIII.

And some cried out, that o'er the Piper's head
They had observ'd a little female fay,
Clad in green gown, and purple-striped plaid,
That fed his wind-bag, aidant of the play ;
Some, impotent to speak, and almost dead
With jumping, as on earth they sat or lay,
Wip'd from their brows, with napkin, plaid, or gown,
The globes of shining sweat that ooze and trickle down.

LXXXIX.

Nor less with jig o'er-labour'd and o'er-wrought,
Down on their chairs dropt MAGGIE and the King,
Amaz'd what supernat'ral spell had caught
And forc'd their heels into such frolicking ;
And much was MAG astonish'd, when she thought
(As sure it was an odd perplexing thing)
That ROBERT'S tune was to her ear the same
As that which Puck had play'd, when from her pot he
came.

XC.

But from that hour, the Monarch and the mob
Gave MAGGIE LAUDER's name to ROBERT's tune,
And so shall it be call'd, while o'er the globe
Travels the waning and the crescent moon,
And from that hour the puissant Piper, ROB,
Whose bagpipe wak'd so hot a rigadoon,
From his well-manag'd bag, and drone, and chanter,
Obtain'd the glorious name of Mighty ROB THE
RANTER.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

OH for that pond'rous broomstick, whereon rode
Grim Beattie Laing, hors'd daringly sublime !
So would I fly above the solar road,
To where the Muses sit on high and chime ;
Eigh ! I would kiss them in their bright abode,
And from their lips suck Poetry and Rhyme,
Till Jove (if such my boldness should displease him)
Cry, " Fy, thou naughty boy ! pack off and mount thy
besom."

II.

It needed not that with a third exclaim,
King JAMES's trumpeter aloud should cry,
Through his long alchemy, the famous name
Of him who, piping, got the victory ;
For, sooth to tell, man, boy, and girl, and dame,
Him the great Prince of Pipers testify,
Not with huzzas and jabbering of tongues,
But with hard-puffing breasts and dance-o'erwearied
lungs :

III.

(And truly, had the crier will'd to shout
The doughty Piper's name through polish'd trump,
His breath had not suffic'd to twang it out,
So did the poor man's lights puff, pant, and jump ;)
Wherefore, to rest them from that dancing-bout,
A while they sat or lay on back or rump,
Gulping with open mouths and nostrils wide
The pure refreshing waves of Jove's aërial tide.

IV.

But unfatigued, upon the hillock's crown
Stood ROB, as if his lungs had spent no breath,
And looked with conscious exultation down
Upon the dance's havoc wide beneath,
Laughing to see th' encumber'd plain bestrown
With people whirl'd and wriggled nigh to death :
Ere long he thus address, with reverent air,
The King, that, breathless yet, sat puffing in his chair :

V.

" My Liege ! though well I now with triple claim
The guerdon of my threefold toils may ask,
As independent of success i' the game
Of jingling words, the ballad-maker's task ;
Yet, as I too, with honourable aim,
Have tapp'd Apollo's rhyme-o'erflowing cask,
Allow me, good my King ! to ope my budget,
And tell my witty tale, that you and MAG may judge it."

VI.

Whereto his breathless King made slow reply
(He drew a gulp of air each word between)—
“Great—Piper !—Mighty—ROB !—Belov’d of sky !
O ! prov’d—too well thy—piping craft—has been !
Witness my lungs—that play so puff—ingly,
And witness yonder—laughter-moving scene !
I’m pinch’d for wind—Ha, ha !—scarce breath I draw—
Pardi !—a sight like yon my Kingship never saw !

VII.

Woes me ! how, sweating in prostration vast,
Men, wives, boys, maidens, lie in dust bestrown,
Gaping for respiration, gasping fast,
Half my liege subjects wreck’d on ANSTER Loan !
’Twill need, methinks, a hideous trumpet-blast,
To rouse them from thus grov’ling basely prone ;
For such effort my man’s lungs yet are frail,
So, ROB, take thou his trump, and rouse them for thy
tale.”

VIII.

He spake,—and at the hint, the Ranter took
The throated metal from the Herald’s hand,
And blew a rousing clangour, wherewith shook
Green sea, and azure sky, and cloddy land :
Up-sprung, as from a trance, with startl’d look,
The prostrate people, and erected stand,
Turning their faces to the knap of ground,
Whence burst upon their ears the loud assaulting sound.

IX.

Then, crowding nearer in a vasty shoal,
They press their sum of carcasses more close,
Till crush'd, and cramm'd, and straiten'd round the knoll,
They rear and poise their bodies on their toes :
So were they pack'd and mortis'd, that the whole
Seem'd but one lump incorp'rate to compose ;
One mass of human trunks unmov'd they show,
Topp'd with ten thousand heads all moving to and fro.

X.

And from the tongues of all those heads there rose
A confus'd murmur through the multitude,
As when the merry gale of summer blows
Upon the tall tops of a stately wood,
And rocks the long consociated boughs,
Rustling amid the leaves a discord rude ;
High perch'd aloft the cuckoo rides unseen,
Embower'd with plenteous shades, and tufts of nodding
green.

XI.

Then way'd the RANTER round and round his hand,
Commanding them to still their hubbub loud :
All in a moment, still and noiseless stand
The widely-circumfus'd and heaving crowd,
As if upon their gums, at ROB'S command,
Were pinn'd those tongues that jabber'd late so proud ;
Tow'rds him, as to their centre, every ear
Inclines its mazy hole, th'expected tale to hear.

XII.

But when the RANTER from his height beheld
The silent world of heads diffus'd below,
With all their ears agape, his visage swell'd,
And burn'd with honest laughter's ruddy glow ;
For who had not from gravity rebell'd,
Girt with infinitude of noddles so ?
He soon into composure starch'd his phiz,
And op'd his fluent mouth, and told his tale, which is—

XIII.

“Where Thirdpart house upon the level plain
Rears up its sooty chimnies high in air,
There liv'd of old, in ALEXANDER'S reign,
Miss SUSAN SCOTT, a lady young and fair,
Who, sith that death her parents both had ta'en,
Sole child, their coffers and their fields did heir—
Their fields, that waved with Ceres' green array,
Their coffers, gorged with gold, where Mammon pri-
son'd lay.

XIV.

Her form was beauteous as the budding spring,
Shap'd by the mother of almighty Love ;
Her soul was but a sorry paltry thing,
As e'er was quicken'd by the breath of Jove :
Her person might have pleased a crownèd King,
Or shone a Dryad in her Thirdpart grove ;
Her soul, her silly soul, alas, to tell !
Was as a rotten egg enclosed in golden shell.

XV.

All day she, sitting at her window, cast
O'er her estate a proud and greedy eye ;
Now measuring her fields, how broad, how vast,
How valuably rich they sunning lie ;
Now summing up the bolls that in the blast
Wave yet unshorn, obnoxious to the sky,
And counting, avariciously, what more
Of gold th'unsickl'd crop would add unto her store.

XVI.

But when the grim and hooded night let fall
O'er Thirdpart's smoky roofs her dusky shade,
She hasten'd from her candle-lighten'd hall
To where her darling coffer'd god was laid,
And freeing him with key from box's thrall,
On floor the gaudy deity display'd,
And with a miser's fumbling palm'd each toy,
And kiss'd bare Mammon's limbs, and laugh'd in silly
joy.

XVII.

With her resided that fam'd wizard old,
Her uncle, and her guardian, MICHAEL SCOTT,
Who there, in Satan's arts malignly bold,
His books of dev'lish efficacy wrote ;
And, lackeyed round (tremendous to be told !)
With demons hung with tails like shaggy goat,
Employ'd their ministrations damn'd to ring
Madrid's resounding bells, and fright the Spanish King

XVIII.

Fit guardian he for such a peevish ward ;
He check'd not her perversity of soul,
But, hell's pernicious logic studying hard,
Gave up the lady to her own control ;
Thus fost'ring, by his foolish disrègard,
The cank'ring vice that o'er her spirit stole :
Captious and proud she was, and fond of strife—
The pertest, prettiest jade of all the girls of Fife.

XIX.

Yet not the less her beauty's wafted fame
A mob of suitors to her mansion drew ;
Her face had charms to lure them and inflame,
Her dow'r had mickle fascination too ;
On cap'ring steeds from all the county came
Fife's sparkish lairds, all resolute to woo,
And win, with courtship's sly assiduous art,
Fair SUSAN's worthy dow'r, and pettish worthless heart.

XX.

So num'rous were her lovers, that, in troth,
I scarce by name can reckon up them all ;
ARDROSS and LARGO, gallant fellows both,
PITCORTHIE, and RANKEILOR, and NEWHALL,
And NEWARK, with his coat of scarlet cloth,
And short STRAVITHY, and RATHILLET tall,
And proud BALCOMIE with his tassell'd hat,
And GIBLISTON the lean, and SAUCHOP round and fat.

XXI.

All these, and many more love-pining men,
She flouted from her chamber scornfully ;
To one alone she us'd not such disdain,
The goodly CHARLY MELVIL of Carnbee ;
For he, the singly cunning of the train,
Enforc'd with costly gifts his am'rous plea,
And brib'd her dull affections icy-cold,
With jewell'd gairish rings, and knacks of labour'd gold

XXII.

For ev'ry time he snatch'd her downy fist,
With its soft warmth to paddle and to play,
He hung a bracelet on her iv'ry wrist,
A golden bracelet like a sunbeam gay ;
And when her lip he rapturously kist
(A kiss she ne'er refus'd for such a pay),
He dropt upon her white neck from his hand
A tangl'd chain of gold, worth many a rood of land.

XXIII.

Till of his trinkets so profuse he grew,
That soon exhausted was his purse's store,
And half his land were in a month or two
Mortgaged for money to procure her more ;
Yet ne'er could he prevail on froward SUE,
Though ne'er he ceas'd to urge her and implore,
T' appoint the long-retarded marriage-day,
And cure his love, and give her promised hand away.

XXIV.

One summer eve, as in delightful walk,
Handed, they past down Thirdpart's avenue,
And in a lightsome interchange of talk,
Whined out their loves, as lovers use to do,
Whilst ev'ry hairy bush upon its stalk
Nodded for joy around them where it grew,
CHARLES took advantage of the lovely hour,
Again t' impress his suit with tongue's glib wordy power.

XXV.

'Oh my sweet SUSAN ! sweet my SUSAN, oh !'—
(Here beat the poor laird his afflicted breast)
'Cast round thine eye, that eye that witches so,
On God's wide world in beauty's garment drest,
On yonder many-listed clouds that glow
Heaven's tap'stry curtaining the blazing west,
On yonder setting rays up-shot on high,
Like tiny wires of gold aslant the gorgeous sky.

XXVI.

Look how the bushy top of ev'ry tree
Is mantled o'er with evening's borrow'd sheen,
And seems to wag and wave more boastfully
To the sweet breeze its leafy wig of green ;
Each herb, and flower, and whin, and bush, we see,
Laughs jocund in creation's richest scene,
Whilst earth reflects on heav'n, and heav'n on earth,
Of God's created things, the beauty and the mirth.

XXVII.

All these are passing lovely to the view,
But lovelier, tenfold lovelier, are to me
Thy form and countenance, my bonny SUE !
Creation's beauties all are summ'd in thee ;
Thine eye out-lustres heaven's most lucid blue ;
Thy cheek out-blooms earth's bloomiest flower and
tree ;
And evening's gaudy clouds that paint the air,
Are fripp'ry to the locks of thy long golden hair !

XXVIII.

Then hey ! my sweeting, when shall come the day
Ordain'd to give me such transcendant charms ?
Still must I pine and fret at thy delay,
Capriciously forbidden from thy arms,
And, like a pair of bellows, puff away
My sighs, and swelter in hot Cupid's harms ?—
For heaven's sake, SUSAN, on my case have pity,
And fix our wedding-day, my chick, my dear, my pretty !'

XXIX.

This said, he, gazing on her saucy eye,
Forestalls the angry answer of her tongue ;
When hark ! a sound of rushing, wildly high,
Is heard, the trees adjoining from among,
As if a whirlwind, bursting from the sky,
Their tops on one another sore had swung ;
And lo ! out springs in maddest pitch of wrath,
PITCORTHIE'S biggest bull upon their peaceful path.

XXX.

'Fly, fly, my love !' the gen'rous MELVIL said,
And interpos'd to meet the monster's shock ;
For fiercely rush'd he on th' endanger'd maid,
Mad at the glaring of her scarlet frock :
'Fly, fly, my love !'—she turn'd about and fled,
With face through terror pale and white as smoke,
And left her laird, at danger of his skull,
To wrestle for his life, and parry with the bull.

XXXI.

The bull's long horns he grip'd, and tow'rd the ground
Press'd down with might his hudy head robust,
Whilst, madder, thus defrauded of his wound,
The brawny brute his bulk still forward thrust,
And, riving with his heels the soil around,
Bespatter'd heaven with turf, and sod, and dust,
And bellow'd till each tree around him shook,
And Echo bellow'd back from her aërial nook.

XXXII.

At last th' intrepid lover, guessing well,
That now far off from harm his SUE was sped,
Ungrip'd the horns, that, white and terrible,
From brow their long and curling menace spread ;
But scarce his grasp was loos'd, when (sad to tell !)
Th' advantag'd brute toss'd churlishly his head,
And with one horn, that suddenly uprose,
Demolish'd and tore off the gallant MELVIL'S nose.

XXXIII.

Clean by the roots uptorn was MELVIL'S nose,
Leaving its place deform and foul with blood ;
Yet stood he not to reap some heavier blows,
And catch in napkin the red rushing flood ;
But quite regardless of his face's woes,
He, hurrying down the alley of the wood,
Fled as if life were hung upon his heels ;
Nor in his sweaty haste his nose's torment feels.

XXXIV.

Thus by the mettle of his heels he bore
His life in safety from the brute away,
And left behind his wound's unsightly gore,
To all the wild-cats of the grove a prey :
Homeward, in dumpish mood, afflicted sore,
He took with lamentation loud his way,
Wailing his piteous bitterness of case,
His nasal honours crush'd, and ghastly havock'd face.

XXXV.

Six weeks he kept his mansion at Carnbee,
Waiting his nose's re-establishment,
In vain ; repair'd, alas ! it could not be,
Too sore that horn the cartilage had shent.
Fife's surgeons crowding came, for love of fee,
With plasters and with saws of loathsome scent,
In vain ; what could or saw or surgeon do ?
Gone was the good old nose, and who could rear a new ?

XXXVI.

Meanwhile he ceas'd not, twice a-week, to send
Sweet cards to her who did his thoughts employ,
Memorials dear, which as he sat and penn'd,
Perch'd laughing on his quill Love's mighty boy,
And on the paper from its inky end
Distill'd delight, and tenderness, and joy :
His cards he sent, but (oh, the sin and shame !)
From wicked shameless SUE there ne'er an answer
came.

XXXVII.

Nor could her cruel silence be explain'd,
Till Fame blew up the tidings to his house,
That she, for whom his nose was marr'd and pain'd,
To whom so long he had address his vows,
Had, for another, now his love disdain'd,
Urg'd by her uncle NEWARK to espouse ;
That publish'd were their banns, that now was fixt
The wedding to be held on Monday forenoon next.

XXXVIII.

Then was the heart of injur'd MELVIL rent
With bitter passion at a slight so base ;
That moment up he started, with intent
To go and chide th' apostate to her face :
Forth from his house in surly chafe he went,
Apparell'd in his coat of golden lace ;
And eastward took his way alone and sad,
Half cursing in his heart, a maid so base and bad.

XXXIX.

But when the little boys and girls survey'd
His lack-nose visage as he travell'd by,
Some to their mothers' houses ran, afraid,
To tell them what a face had met their eye ;
Some with their fingers pointed undismay'd,
Giggling and blithe, at his deformity ;
Ev'n ploughmen, at the road-edge, paus'd from toil,
And held their sturdy sides, and loudly laugh'd a while.

XL.

Yet onward held the hapless laird his gait,
Regardless of their mockery and scorn ;
His sole vexation was the girl ingrate,
In whose defence his beauty had been shorn.
He soon attain'd the ample hall, where sate,
In morning dishabille, the fair forsworn ;
And, ent'ring boldly in his angry mood,
With grimly flatten'd face before her frowning stood.

XLI.

'Fy, horror ! who art thou,' she scoffing said,
'That with defeature horrible to see,
Dar'st thus into my room advance thy stride,
To fright my lapdog, and to sicken me ?
Go, hie thee homeward, thou deform, and hide
That aspect in the dingles of Carnbee ;
There with thy rabbits burrow thee, till sprout
Forth from between thy cheeks a beautifying snout.'

XLII.

This said, th'insulting creature from her chair,
Red with resentment, on a sudden springs,
And bolting forward with a saucy air,
Her shapely person from the chamber flings,
Leaving her honest laird confounded there,
Heart-anguish'd by vexation's sharpest stings,
That he may vent his anger and his fume
On the fair carvèd chairs that decorate her room.

XLIII.

He got no long time to displode and vent
On the fair chairs his bosom-choking ire ;
For, from his closet by Miss SUSAN sent,
Sir MICHAEL rush'd, the sorcerer stout and dire,
With staff in hand, to rattle chastisement
Upon the ribs and backbone of the squire :
He beat him from the house with magic stick,
And added surly words, and rude discourteous kick.

XLIV.

Poor MELVIL ! griev'd, and mortified, and damp't,
His back he turn'd upon th'uncivil door,
And, musing vengeance, down the alley tramp't,
As boil'd his heart with indignation o'er ;
He bit his lip, and curs'd the soil, and stamp't,
Chafing his wrath with imprecation more ;
For what man, so misus'd, could have forborne
To ban Sir MICHAEL SCOTT, and SUE the fair forsworn.

XLV.

So down the avenue he banning past,
Scarce conscious whither in his fret he went,
Till twilight tenanted the sky at last,
Pavilioning o'er earth her sable tent,
And the round moon, up-wheeling from the vast
Of sea, in pomp of clouds magnificent,
Embellish'd, with her sober silvery shine,
The leaves and barky trunks of Thirdpart's fir and pine.

XLVI.

Alas ! was e'er like me poor lover crost ?'
(He thus aloud deplored his wretched case)
So fool'd, abus'd and cocker'd to my cost,
So beaten into sorrow and disgrace !
Was't not enough that that for the jade I lost
The rising honours of my ruin'd face ;
But, like a hedge-born beggar, tatters-hung,
Thus from her hated gate I must be switch'd and flung?

XLVII.

May vengeance seize thee, thou foul wizard churl,
For basting me at such an irksome rate !
May Satan gripe thee by thy heel, and hurl
Thy carcass whizzing through hell's hottest gate !
And as for thee, thou proud ungrateful girl,
Whose baseness, to my grief, I know too late,
May some good pow'r the injur'd lover's friend,
On thy perfidious head a wing'd requital send !'

XLVIII.

His pray'r he thus ejaculating spake,
Nor knew that some good pow'r was nigh to hear ;
For in the middle of a flow'ry brake,
That, white with moonshine, spread its thicket near
Lay Tommy Puck, the gentle fay, awake,
And Mrs Puck, his gentle lady dear,
Basking and lolling in the lunar ray,
And tumbling up and down in brisk fantastic play.

XLIX.

Quoth frisky Tommy to his elfin wife,
'Didst thou not hear the gentleman, my chuck ?
'Tis young CARNBEE, the sweetest laird of Fife,
Whom sour Sir MICHAEL with his cane has struck.
What think ye ? By Titania's precious life !
Fits it not now the tender-hearted Puck
T'assist an injur'd lover, and to plot
A scheme of nice revenge on SUE and MICHAEL
SCOTT?'

L.

'Surely, my dear !' his fairy consort said,
'Go forth, and to the man address thy talk :'
This heard,—he from his bushy arbour's shade
Flung out his minim stature on the walk,
And stood in dwarfish finery array'd,
Gaudy as summer-bean's bloom-cover'd stalk ;
He doff'd his hat, and made a bow profound,
And thus bespoke the laird in words of pleasing sound :

H

LI.

' Marvel not, MELVIL, that before thy feet
I plant me thus in fearless attitude ;
For I have heard, within my close retreat,
What thou hast utter'd in thy fretful mood ;
And well I know thy truth how with deceit
Repaid, thy faith with base ingratitude :
Good soul ! I pity thee with all my heart,
And therefore from my bush to thy assistance start.

LII.

For much it grieves Tom Puck's too feeling breast,
That one so good, so liberal and true,
Should thus become a laughter and a jest,
Mock'd, jilted, beaten into black and blue ;
I like to help whom malice has oppress,
And prompt a lover generous as you ;
So with attention list what I propose,
To baffle and avenge, and laugh to scorn your foes.

LIII.

On Monday next, th'appointed wedding-day,
For perjur'd SUE her NEWARK to espouse,
When her long hall with feasting shall be gay,
And smoke with meats, with riot, and with bouse,
From thy paternal mansion haste away,
At height of noon, to Thirdpart's bustling house,
That thou, by time of dinner, may be there,
Prepar'd to climb the steps of her detested stair.

LIV.

And when th'exulting bridegroom and his bride,
Surrounded with their festive spousal train,
Are seated at their tables long and wide,
Wielding their noisy forks and knives amain,
Then burst into the hall with dauntless stride,
Through menials, greasy cooks, and serving-men,
Nor speak a word though in thy way they stand,
But dash the scroyls aside with swing of boist'rous hand.

LV.

Surprise, be sure, shall seize the feasters all
At such a bold intruder on their treat ;
Their forks, half-lifted to their mouths, shall fall
Down on their plates, unlighten'd of their meat ;
Yet speak not still, but casting round the hall
An eye whose every glance is fire and threat,
Thou in a corner of the room shalt see
Sir MICHAEL'S magic staff, the same that basted thee.

LVI.

Snatch up that magic energetic stick,
And, in thy clench'd hand wielding it with might,
On MICHAEL'S white bald pate discharge thou quick
A pelt enough to stun the wizard wight :
Strange consequence shall follow from that lick ;
Yet be not thou amaz'd or struck with fright,
But springing to the table's upper end,
Let on his niece's nose an easier pat descend.

LVII.

I will not now unfold what odd event
From either stroke will suddenly ensue ;
Enough to know, that plenteous punishment
Shall light on grim Sir MICHAEL and on SUE :
Go—by your nose's cure, be confident
That Tommy Puck aright thus counsels you.'—
This said, he, from a vial silver-bright,
Pour'd out upon his palm a powder small and white ;

LVIII.

And to his mouth up-lifting it, he blows
The magic dust on MELVIL'S blemish'd face,
When (such its power) behold, another nose
Sprouts out upon the scarr'd and skinless place,
And to th'astonish'd moon, fair-jutting, shows,
Its supplemental elegance and grace ;
Which done, he, shining like a bright glow-worm,
Plung'd deep amid the brake his puny pretty form.

LIX.

Amaze had taken MELVIL, when appear'd
Erect before his steps the pigmy fay ;
Yet not with less attention had he heard
What courteous Tommy did so kindly say ;
That heart, late vex'd and tortur'd, now was cheer'd,
And merrily beat in hope's delightful play :
Homeward he jogg'd from Thirdpart's haunted shade
Proud of his novel nose, and Tommy's tender'd aid.

LX.

Arriv'd the day when saucy SUE should wed
Young NEWARK, vap'ring in his scarlet coat ;
From his paternal mansion MELVIL sped
To Thirdpart house t'achieve his ready plot.
'Twas dinner time ; the tables all were spread
With luscious sirloins reeking richly hot,
Gravies and pies, and steaming soups of hare,
And roasted hen and goose, and titbits nice and rare.

LXI.

SUE at the table's place of honour sat,
Dealing the warm broth from its vessel out ;
Whilst, slashing with his knife through lean and fat,
Carv'd at the lower end SIR MICHAEL stout :
'Twas nought but mirth, and junketing, and chat,
And handing wings and legs of fowl about,
And noise of silver spoons, and clank and clatter
Of busy forks and knives, of porringer and platter.

LXII.

Squire MELVIL heard without, the dinner's din ;
Nor tarried ; but with brisk and boist'rous bound,
Jump'd up the stairs, and rudely rushing in,
Dash'd down whom standing in his way he found ;
Menials and apron'd cooks of greasy chin,
Fist-founder'd, went a-rapping to the ground,
With all their loads of sauces, meats, and plates,
In ruin fat and rich hurl'd on their stounded pates.

LXIII.

Astonish'd were the feasters when they view'd
Such bold intruder stand before their eyes,
The morsels in their mouths that lay half chew'd,
Could not be swallow'd through their great surprise ;
Their half-raisd forks, bestuck with gobbets good,
Dropt, as if impotent more high to rise ;
Each on his neighbour cast a meaning stare,
As if he dumbly ask'd, What does Squire MELVIL there?

LXIV.

'Twas for a moment silent in the hall,
As if pale Death, the chapless and the grim,
Had taken by the throat, and chok'd them all,
With his long, fleshless, scraggy fingers slim ;
Till, throwing round his glance from wall to wall,
The Squire discerned the staff with tassel trim—
Sir MICHAEL's staff with head of silver white,
Wherewith he was enjoin'd its owner's poll to smite.

LXV.

He flew, he grasp'd it by its silver rind,
And to the ceiling swinging it on high,
Brought down on MICHAEL's pate as quick as wind,
A pelt that whizz'd and rattl'd horribly ;
Sounded his bald skull with the stroke unkind,
Re-echoing in each lore-filled cavity,
When, O the wonder ! on his high arm-chair,
Chang'd was the churlish knight that instant to a hare.

LXVI.

His dainty head with learning so replete,
Collaps'd, grew round, and little, and long-ear'd ;
His arms, that yet were stretch'd to carve the meat,
Quite shrunken into two fore-legs appear'd ;
His brawny thighs turn'd hind-legs on his seat
Whereon his metamorphos'd form was rear'd ;
And, to complete the quadruped, out sprouted
A short tail from his rump, with plenteous hair about it.

LXVII.

He sat not long, so transmew'd, on his chair,
But, lighting on the carpet-cover'd floor,
Scudded as swift as lightning down the stair,
On his four bestial legs, to gain the door :
'Hollo !' cried boy and groom, 'A hare ! a hare !'
As he flew from the house their eyes before :
'Hollo ! let loose on puss the fleet grey hound !'
Was bawl'd in Thirdpart's court from one to t'other
round.

LXVIII.

Unkennel'd in a twink was fleet grey hound,
And after puss commenc'd the keen pursuit ;
O'er plough'd, o'er sown, o'er green, o'er fallow ground,
With lev'ret craft, and wile of weary foot,
With skip and scud, and ditch-o'erleaping bound,
The wizard ran in guise of hairy brute,
While snuffing out with sapient nose his track,
Came yelling at his heels all Thirdpart's clam'rous pack.

LXIX.

Eastward they scour'd, out-scampering the gale,
Long-winded dog and pursy panting hare,
Till, taking refuge in the streets of Crail,
Sir MICHAEL plung'd him in a jaw-hole there,
And left, without, his foes with wagging tail
Worrying the sky with bark of loud despair,
As he, secure, was fain to slink and cuddle,
Encav'd beneath the street within his miry puddle.

LXX.

There let us leave the knight to cuddle fain,
And long-tongued dog to volley out his yell,
And turn we to the banquet-hall again,
Where MICHAEL'S metamorphosis befell :
No sooner saw the squire that not in vain
The staff had lighted, but succeeded well,
Than, bounding up to where jilt SUSAN sat,
On her fair nose's bridge he brought a gentle pat.

LXXI.

A second miracle ensues ; for, lo !
That nose, her countenance's pride and grace,
Grows out, and shoots, and lengthens at the blow,
Ridiculously sprouting from her face ;
And aye it swells and beetles moe and moe,
Tap'ring to such a length its queer disgrace,
That dips its point at last amid the broth
That near her lies in dish upon the table-cloth.

LXXII.

Nor did her aspect only suffer shame ;
For, in proportion as extends her nose,
Her shoulders, late so beautiful of frame,
Into a hump up heaving, hugely rose,
Most mountainous and high, as ill became
Fair bride array'd in sumptuous wedding clothes ;
Her very gown was burst and riven through,
With the large fleshy swell, so monstrous big it grew !

LXXIII.

Then shook the room with laughter's frequent crack,
As saw the guests each droll excrescence rise ;
One pointed to her still up heaving back,
One to her nose's still enlarging size ;
Ha ! ha ! ' from every squire's throat loudly brake,
'Te-hee ! ' each lady chuckles and replies ;
'Heav'ns, what a hideous nose ! ' cried every dame ;
'Heav'ns, what a hideous hump ! ' did every laird
exclaim.

LXXIV.

Such was the punishment which silly SUE
From her resentful much-wrong'd lover bore ;
And so was sour Sir MICHAEL punish'd too,
For caning honest MELVIL from her door :
Wherefore, as now the work of vengeance due
Was finish'd, CHARLIE left her chamber-floor,
And turn'd his face, rejoicing, towards home,
Mutt'ring his grateful thanks to little elfin Tom."

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

GAY-HEARTED I began my playful theme,
But with a heavy heart I end my song ;
For I am sick of life's delirious dream,
Sick of this world and all its weight of wrong ;
Ev'n now, when I again attempt to stream
My merry verse, as I was wont, along,
'Tween ev'ry sportive thought, there now and then
Flows a sad serious tear upon my playful pen.

II.

Scarce had the victor ceas'd his hindmost clause,
When from th' immensity of folk afar,
Rose such a hideous shout of loud applause,
As ever stunn'd with outcry sun or star ;
Each tongue grew riotous within its jaws,
Clacking an acclamation popular ;
Hands high o'erhead uplifted, round and round,
Struck plausive palm on palm, and clapt a rattling sound.

III.

And twice ten thousand hats, aloft upthrown
In black ascension, blot heaven's blue serene,
O'ercanopying ANSTER'S crowded Loan
With crown and rim, as with a dusky screen ;
And bonnets broad, and caps of sharp'ning cone,
Whirling 'twixt earth and firmament are seen,
And lasses' cowls, and hoods, uptost on high,
Encroach with tawdry clout upon the clouds of sky.

IV.

As when a troop of locusts, famine-pin'd,
From Edom's unblest monster-breeding womb,
Sail on the hot wings of the southern wind,
Wriggling aloft their sky-hung mass of gloom ;
And where El Sham's clear golden riv'lets wind,
Through her gay gardens distributing bloom,
They light, and spread their devastation round,
Bepainting black as pitch the green luxuriant ground :

V.

Just such a darkness mounts into the sky,
Of hat and hood, of bonnet and of cap,
So thick, that those who toss them up on high
Below i'the shade are heard to shout and clap ;
For still the folk applaud it lustily,
And pain their tingling palms with noisy rap,
Expressing thus, with deaf'ning acclamation,
Of ROBERT'S merry tale their hearty approbation.

VI.

Nor sits the Monarch heedless of th'acclaim ;
But, rising up majestic from his chair,
With kingly praise augments the victor's fame,
And clapping, grinds between his palms the air ;
Then seizes he the fingers of the Dame,
And, gently raising from her seat the fair,
He, as the sign and seal of marriage-band,
Slips into ROBERT'S grasp his MAGGIE'S tender hand.

VII.

He bade his choir of trumpeters apply
To mouth their hollow instruments of sound,
And, in an unison of clangour high,
Publish the marriage to the world around :
The fellows blew it to the peak of sky,
And sky sent down again the loud rebound :
Earth did to heaven high the news upthrow,
And heaven re-bruited back th'alarum down below.

VIII.

But now the beam-hair'd coursers of the sun,
All smoking with their fiery hot fatigue,
Their task of charioting had pranc'd and run,
And hurl'd in sea their hissing golden gig :
Their unshorn driver had but just begun
Beyond the isle of Bute the wave to swig ;
And, twinkling o'er Auld Reekie's smoke afar,
Peep'd through heaven's mantle blue the modest even-
ing-star.

IX.

And soon the Moon in hood of silver drest,
All glistening and gladsome as may be,
Forth from her glorious casement in the east
Look'd laughing down upon both land and sea ;
And on the bosom of the dark'ning west
Her pearly radiance shot rejoicingly ;
Also the heads of all that fill the Loan
Wax'd yellow with the rays that on them streaming
shone.

X.

Wherefore, as now the damp nocturnal air
Began to dribble down its chilly dew,
And as, of all the business of the Fair,
Nought now remain'd upon the green to do ;
The herald, from beside the monarch's chair,
Abroad the signal of dispersion blew,
That the wide multitude, dispread around,
Should now break up its mass, and leave the nighted
ground.

XI.

Which heard, the congregated folk upbroke
With loud disruption their diffusion vast,
And, split and shoaling off in many a flock,
With homeward squeeze they turbulently past :
Beneath their feet the pillar'd earth did rock,
As up to Jove a dusty cloud they cast,
That blear'd the eyes of night's bright glimm'ring queen,
And chok'd the brilliant stars, and dimm'd their twink-
ling sheen.

XII.

And such the clutter was, when shoal from shoal
With impulse violent was torn and riv'n,
As when the vaulting ice, that floors the pole,
Touch'd by the fiery shafts of warming heav'n,
Splits into fractur'd isles, that crash and roll
Diverse, athwart the molten ocean driv'n ;
The Greenland boatman hears the noise afar,
And blesses for its heat day's winter-routing star.

XIII.

So loudly rush'd from ANSTER's cumber'd Loan,
The burdenous and bustling multitude,
Kicking the o'ertrampled earth they trod upon
With saucy heel in their impetuous mood ;
Some to their tents of blanket jump'd anon,
That on the fields and crofts adjoining stood ;
Some to their booths and houses in the town,
Hie hot with huddling haste, and hop and hurry down.

XIV.

Meanwhile, the King, as now sufficient space
Was for his passage clear'd about the mound,
Descended from his lofty honour'd place,
Where sat he 'mid his gallant courtiers round :
Close at his right hand downward walk'd with grace,
The well-earn'd prize, bright MAGGIE the renown'd ;
While the great victor, at his other side,
Attended blithe and brisk, exulting in his bride.

XV.

On their brave nags their persons up they swing,
And to the borough gently jogging ride,
Hemm'd thick around with an illustrious ring
Of gay Court-ladies, trooping side by side,
And Lords, whose coats with gold-lace spangl'd, fling
Back on th' abash'd Moon her beamy pride,
And jolly Knights, and booted Esquires stout,
And burghers, clowns, and boys, a noisy rabble-rout.

XVI.

As downward to the town they tramp and trot,
The mingled peals of gratulation rise ;
For on their catlings, fiddlesticks, I wot,
Bicker'd and skipt in funny furious wise,
And trumpet rear'd again its solemn note
Sonorously, assailant on the skies,
Full loudly lifting in a jocund tune,
The name of RANTER ROB up to the man i' the moon.

XVII.

And sounding cymbals clink and ring sublime,
Clash'd overhead in lofty unison ;
And fife and flute in merry whistle chime,
Soothing the lull'd ear with dulcet tone ;
While aye the bass-drum, at his proper time,
Swallows the music with his sudden groan ;
Till drum, flute, cymbal, trumpet, all are drown'd
In shouts, that pealing rise from the mad mob around.

XVIII.

Thus rode the train, as if in triumph down,
Exulting, through the night's moon-gilded shade,
Till reaching MAGGIE's quarter of the town,
Støps at her house the splendid cavalcade.
(For be it now, my good co-townsmen, known,
In th' East-Green's best house fair MAGGIE staid,
Near where St Ayle's small lodge in modern day
Admits to mystic rites her bousy masons gay.)

XIX.

At MAGGIE's door they stopp'd; when, lighting there,
The bridegroom brisk, and jolly-minded King,
And showy Nobleman, and Lady fair,
From pad and saddle on the causey spring,
And, passing in due order up her stair,
The good landlady to her chamber bring,
A pomp of rare attendants brave and bright,
With sweetly-biting jest, and joke of dear delight.

XX.

In her torch-brighten'd chamber down they sate
Upon her chairs, jocundly one and all,
And exercise their tongues in social prate,
Till MAGGIE's cooks and JAMES's seneschal
Prepare and range each dish, and supper plate
On her long table in her dining-hall:—
There let us leave a while, King, Lord, and Lady,
And saunter through the town till supper fare be ready

XXI.

Heav'ns ! how from street to street the people reel,
As if they knew not where to rush for joy !
How rocks the causey with incessant heel
Of hurrying man, and wife, and maid, and boy !
From lane and wynd the sounds of gladness peal,
Hitting the stars with clamorous annoy ;
As all the houses' walls and roofs are bright
With bonfire's yellow glow, and candle's gentler light.

XXII.

For in each window's every pane is seen,
Stuck into fitly-fashion'd wood or clay,
A tallow-candle flinging forth its sheen,
T' augment th' illumination's grand display ;
How flame the houses with a lustre keen,
In emulation of the sun-bright day !
Ev'n the poor old-wife's backroom-window glows,
Gilding the good green kail that underneath it grows.

XXIII.

While in each well-paved street and alley strait,
And at the Cross, and up along the Loan,
Their spiry curls huge bonfires elevate,
Cracking with heat the ground and causey-stone ;
For ev'ry bonfire was a cart-load great
Of Dysart coal, that redly flash'd and shone,
Emblazing with its tongues of flame so bright,
The dusk and smutty brow of star-bestudded night.

XXIV.

And, gawntress'd round each ruddy fire about,
Hogsheads of porter and of cheery ale,
Forth from their little gurgling bung-holes spout
Their genial streams in tankard, pot, and pail :
Oh, 'twas a wild notorious guzzling-bout !
That night no throat was narrow, or was frail,
But, in long draughts delicious, swallow'd down
The barley's mantling cream, and bev'rage stout and
brown.

XXV.

(Not from thy brew-house's well-barrell'd store,
O ROGER ! comes a drink of stronger proof,
Though foams thy hearty ale the tankard o'er,
And sends its cork a-thund'ring to the roof ;)
Ev'n ancient men, whose hairs were thin and hoar,
Then staid not from the fuddle's fun aloof,
But drank till every head was giddy turning,
And to their reeling eyes each fire in sky seem'd burn-
ing.

XXVI.

Yet not all night each brisk warm-blooded boy,
Sat drinking with his sweetheart blithe and boon ;
They on the Loan, in many a reel, employ
Their bouncing bodies wriggling to the moon,
And almost wince away their heels for joy,
Tossing and riving their dance-bursten shoon,
Whilst, ever and anon, or ere she wist,
Smack by her partner dear each bonny lass was kiss'd.

XXVII.

Such out of doors was the disport and bouse ;
But higher was the pitch of joy within ;
That night was ANSTER'S every barn and house
Converted into tippling-shop and inn ;
Garrets and bed-rooms reek with hot carouse,
And steaming punch of whisky and of gin ;
The kitchen fires are crowded round and round
With rings of lively lads, that swig their bowls profound.

XXVIII.

Hey ! how their glasses jingle merrily !
How rings the table with their revel-roar !
How, as they toast their MAG with three times three,
Sounds with loud heel the vex'd tormented floor !
They sing, they clap, they laugh with honest glee ;
Were never seen such merry men before !
Through window glass and stony wall bursts out,
Abroad on night's dull ear, the wassail's frequent shout.

XXIX.

But now, in MAGGIE'S tapestry-deck'd hall,
Serv'd is the sumptuous marriage-supper up,
And clean neat-handed cook, and seneschal,
Have set each mess, and dish, and plate, and cup ;
So down in seemly order sit they all,
With stomachs stiff and resolute to sup,
And set their griding forks and knives to work,
On turkey, goose, and hen, cold veal, and cheek of pork.

XXX.

Behoves it not my bardship to relate

What various viands burden'd MAGGIE'S board ;

What lay on this, and what on t'other plate,

What Lady first was help'd, and by what Lord,

What mess the King, and what the others ate :

That would be tedious, trifling, 'pon my word ;

I will not do't, though I could tell, in sooth,

How oft each fork was rais'd to every munching mouth.

XXXI.

Suffice it, good my townsmen, that ye know,

That there, fastidious teeth found pleasant food,

That all the cates that kingly banquets show

Were spread before them, fragrant, rich, and good ;

And that, though some ate less and some ate moe,

Each ate as much, be certain, as he could ;

Till, tir'd at last of piddling with their gums,

They eas'd of knife and fork their fingers and their thumbs.

XXXII.

But when the sound of teeth had ceas'd i' the hall,

And fork and knife lay idle on their plate,

And guest and hostess, backward leaning all,

Their toothpicks now were plying, saturate,

Up from his seat arose the bridegroom tall,

Where, to his blooming spouse oppos'd, he sate,

And, ere the table-cloth was ta'en away,

He turn'd him to the King, and thus address his say :—

XXXIII.

"Think not, my Liege, that fortune or that chance,
To-day hath made me in my conquest blest,
Impelling me by casual circumstance,
To jump without a warrant, like the rest ;
'Twas not alone with Heav'n's high suffrance,
I put my jumping-prowess to the test ;
'Twas by its order I in sack was bound ;
'Twas with its favour too, that I my bride have found.

XXXIV.

Nor deem that some dumb beldam, Satan's tool,
Or wily witch, or second-sighted seer,
Hath, oracling, deceiv'd me like a fool,
To think I to supernal Pow'r am dear ;
No, Monarch ; by the cowl of old St Rule !
I heard the order with no proxy ear,
And with my own true eye unfalsified,
I, ev'n upon my chair, the goodly vision spied :

XXXV.

For, on an evening in December last,
('Twas just the evening of that day whereon
The stout-lung'd criers through the Border past,
Proclaiming what should hap in ANSTER Loan,)
As down to supper's sober cool repast
I sat me, in my dining-room alone,
Musing upon the late heard news so odd,
Blown from the trump of fame and crier's throat, abroad ;

XXXVI.

I happen'd in my fingers up to take
The pepper-box, where lurk'd my spicy stores,
And held it o'er my plate, intent to shake
The fragrant atoms from its little bores,
When, as my hand inverted it, there brake
Out from the lid's small perforated pores,
A stream of beauteous smoke, that, like a mist,
Curl'd its delicious wreaths around my shaded fist.

XXXVII.

Astonish'd at the prodigy, I threw
The steaming box upon the table-cloth,
When, more with miracle t' amaze my view,
It frisk'd and trotted 'mid the plates, i' troth,
And ceas'd not from its num'rous holes to spue
Its incense, white as flakes of ocean froth,
Up-sending to the ceiling of the room
Its supernat'ral flux of pure and fragrant fume.

XXXVIII.

I sat and gaz'd—not long ; when, strange to say,
Forth from that reeky pillar's paly base,
Started at once a little female fay,
Giggling and blithely laughing in my face :
Her height was as the lily, that in May
Lifts to the sun her head's envermeil'd grace ;
Her beauty as the rays of various glow,
That glorify the length of heaven's sea-drinking bow.

XXXIX.

The gown in which her elf-ship was array'd,
Like to the peacock's painted feather shined,
And on the table-cloth redundant spread
Its lustrous train for half a foot behind ;
Over her breast her purple-striped plaid
Lay floating loose and thin as woven wind ;
And gorgeous was her head-dress as the hue
Of Iris-flower, that spreads her velvet petals blue.

XL.

Deck'd was her neck's circumference with a row
Of glittering di'monds, strung in costly band,
Small pearly berries that are wont to grow
Upon the bushes of old Fairyland ;
And in each di'mond's orb so fair in show,
My candle's image burning seem'd to stand,
That her white slender neck was all in gleam,
Doubly impearlèd thus with light's reflected beam.

XLI.

And pendant from her neck, by golden thread,
A little dangling silver lute I saw,
Of fashion rare, and quaintly polishèd,
Not thicker than a pipe of oaten straw :
She laugh'd and nodded courteously her head,
Belike to clear away my doubt and awe,
For, sooth to say, I was not unafear'd,
When from my pepper-box good lady fay appear'd.

XLII.

She dropt a curtesy, reverently low,
And thus bespoke in clear and mellow voice ;
'Twas sweeter than the chiming winds that blow
Upon th' Æolian harp a whiffled noise :—
'Excuse me, good your worship ! that I so
With my quaint presence mar your supper-joys ;
I have some little matter to impart ;
'Twill not detain you long.—Nay, ROBERT, do not start :

XLIII.

Compose thee, Squire, and calmly give thine ear
To what shall from my gentle mouth proceed,
For mickle shall it profit thee to hear,
And prize aright the value of my rede ;
And be assur'd thy person, ROB, is dear
To the slim creatures of the fairy breed,
That thus I peer from out my box of spice,
To tender, for thy weal, my uncompell'd advice.

XLIV.

Hast thou not heard the wond'rous news to-day,
Through all the marches of the Border blown,
Of sports, and games, and celebrations gay,
Promulgate to be held in ANSTER Loan ;
And that a maid the victor's toils shall pay,—
A maid, whose beauty is excell'd by none !
Thou hast—and I surprised thee deep in muse,
A-pond'ring on th' import of such amazing news.

XLV.

Go, when o'er Cocklaw peeps light's golden horn,
And seek a supple ass whereon to ride ;
Go, seek a long sack, sturdy and untorn,
Wherein to jump with drolly-trammel'd stride ;
Go, seek a bagpipe whose wind-pouch, unworn,
May well the wrath of prison'd breath abide ;
Go, set thy brain to work like vat of ale,
And skim thou off for MAG some smart ingenious tale.

XLVI.

And know, when at the Loan is tried thy skill,
Thy ass I'll nettle on with spur unseen ;
Into thy bones and sinews I'll instil
Great vigour to o'erjump the quaking green ;
Thy bagpipe's pouch with tempest I will fill,
Lending thy tune a witchery not mean ;
And from thy study-rack'd perplexèd brains,
A merry tale I'll squeeze, the helpmate of thy pains.

XLVII.

So shalt thou, Squire, in Scotland's view be crown'd
Upon the spot, with victory and fame,
And ride a happy bridegroom from the ground,
Elate, and glorying in thy peerless dame ;
Yet when thy toil's transcendant prize is found,
And marriage revelries thy joy proclaim,
I charge thee, as my aid shall make thee blest,
Forget not what I now, as to my box, request.

XLVIII.

This box—this pepper-pox—this homely shrine,
Wherein confin'd by wizard spell I stay,
Must be transported in a pouch of thine,
When thou to ANSTER Loan dost take thy way ;
And when thou down to marriage-feast and wine
Shalt sit, in MAGGIE'S hall, a bridegroom gay,
Then from thy pocket draw it in a trice,
And on the table-cloth lay down the box of spice.

XLIX.

Ask not the purport of my odd behest,
'Twill be unriddl'd in the proper place ;
'Tis thine t' effect the task, and leave the rest
To Madam Puck's good complaisance and grace.'—
Here Madam Puck her piping voice suppress,
And, with a sweet smile on her little face,
Rear'd up the small lute in her lily fist,
And with her rose-red lip its furbish'd silver kiss'd.

L.

She play'd a tune so delicate and sweet,
So overpowering with its ravishment,
That sit I could no longer on my seat,
But up and cap'ring o'er my chamber went,
As if within the soles of both my feet,
A store of frisky mercury was pent
(And, by the bye, 'twas just the tune with which
My bagpipe did to-day your reeling Loan bewitch).

LI.

At length she ceas'd, and in a stroke o' the eye
Delv'd down within her spicy jail again,
And in her stead left curling bonnily
A smoke whose odour ravish'd nose and brain—
No more, my gracious Liege—what need have I
Longer to talk, where talking would be vain?—
Behold—what Mrs Puck commanded me—
'Tis but a sorry thing—the pepper-box—d'ye see?"

LII.

• Thus speaking, from the pocket of his coat,
Wherein he had convey'd it to our town,
The goblin-haunted pepper-box he brought,
And, laughing, set it on the table down.
Great laughter crackled in the Monarch's throat,
As on the cloth he saw the thing y-thrown;
And giggling guests 'gan fling their jeers and jokes
Upon the paltry frame of ROB's poor pepper-box.

LIII.

But soon was changed their blithe to fearful mood,
When strait, afore each half-mistrusting eye,
The babling box of pepper, where it stood,
Began again to dance spontaneously,
And fidgeted and frisked, in strange inquietude,
Among the plates that thickly-scatter'd lie,
Directing to the table's middle part
Its motion, by the side of broken pie and tart.

LIV.

Yet to a greater pitch their wonder grew,
When, at the table's other end, they spy
Fair MAGGIE'S mustard-pot commencing too
To gambol and to fidge in sympathy
(The self-same pot, whence burst to MAGGIE'S view,
Of late, Tom Puck, with brightly-breeched thigh);
As would a hen leap on a fire-hot griddle,
So leap'd the mustard-pot toward the table's middle.

LV.

Short while they flirted, pepper-box and pot,
Most laughable, yet fearful to be view'd,
Till, meeting on the table's midmost spot,
Stock-still th' ignoble bouncing vessels stood,
And from their little cells, where lay the hot
Ground pepper, and the biting mustard good,
Were in a moment seen at once to break
Two parallel white shafts of silv'ry spouting reek.

LVI.

Ascending curl'd, not long, each sep'rate fume,
Up-throwing to the roof its preciousness,
When with a fire-flash that emblaz'd the room,
Burst from the hollow mustard-pot's recess
Good Tommy Puck, the fay of roseate bloom,
Clad in his custom'd gaudery of dress;
And, with a second gleam of flashy light,
Sprung from the spicy-box good Madam Puck to sight.

LVII.

With faces to each other turn'd they rise,
Scarce sunder'd by a finger-length of space,
And, in an instant, as they recognise,
With glimpse of quick eye, each the other's face,
They fall as, if o'ercome with sweet surprise,
On one another's necks in close embrace,
Like friends, that, having long liv'd far apart,
Meet and relieve in tears the joy-o'erburden'd heart.

LVIII.

Astonishment his whitely ensign shows
On each spectator's visage at the sight ;
Courtier and King, that sat to table close,
Slily push'd back their chairs, confounded quite ;
The ladies hid their faces in their clothes,
Or underneath the table slunk for fright ;
Save MAG and ROB, who laugh'd to see once more,
The tricky kindly ouches that hail'd them heretofore.

LIX.

Awhile the pair of pigmies on the spot,
Lock'd their fantastic persons jole to jole,
And, as two doves of plummy varnish'd throat
Sit billing in their dove-cot's nested hole,
Their liquid wee lips twitter'd kisses hot,
In fond commutuality of soul ;
It was a treat to see how sweetheart-like
Their fiery fairy mouths the dear collison strike !

LX.

At length, as rapture's first excess was past,
They disentangle their endear'd embrace,
And, tow'rd the King and guests that sat aghast,
Turn'd round each minim prettiness of face ;
Dame Puck, to Mag and those beside her plac'd,
Let fall a curtesy with a courtly grace ;
Tom, fronting JAMES, took hat from off his brow,
And curv'd his goblin back into a goodly bow.

LXI.

A glance upon the company he shot
And smil'd on MAG who sat at head o'the board,
Then from his shrilly dulcet-piping throat,
Sweet utterance of word-clad breath he pour'd ;
" Oh Monarch ! let amazement seize thee not ;
Be of good cheer, each dame and noble lord ;
Ungown your timid faces all ye fair ;
Draw ye to table close, each gentleman, your chair.

LXII.

For do not think that in us twain you spy
Two spirits of the perter wicked sort,
That, buzzing on bad errand through the sky,
In pranks of molestation take their sport,
Confounding old-wives' churns, and slipping sly
Their stools from underneath them, to their hurt,
Or chucking young sweet maids below the chin,
That so they bite the tongue, their tender mouths
within.

LXIII.

Of kindlier hearts are Tommy and his spouse,
Aidant to some, benevolent to all;
For oft we sweep the thrifty matron's house
With besom quaint, invisible, and small,
Oft from her cheese and butter chase the mouse,
Preyless, into his cavern in the wall,
And oft her churn-staff gripe, that in a twink
The waves of bubbling cream to buttery masses sink.

LXIV.

But chiefly of young lovers true and kind,
The patrons and the guardians good are we,
Linking each mutual and harmonious mind
In silver cord of dear complacency;
But when the vows that should restrain and bind,
Broke, to another's misery, we see,
'Tis ours to take the injur'd lover's part,
And on the perjurd head deal out th' avenging smart.

LXV.

Witness what vengeance seized Miss SUSAN SCOTT,
Whose back and visage, for her breach of troth,
Suffer'd a penal and opprobrious blot,
Swoln out to counterpoise each other's growth;
And though, for our suggestion of that plot,
To punish her and her sour guardian both,
My wife and I have suffer'd hard and long,
Yet, by my Monarch's beard ! 'twas right t' avenge the
wrong.

LXVI.

O we have suffer'd much !—that wizard foul
(Beshrew his meagre vile malicious ghost !)
No sooner 'scap'd from Crail's vile sewer-hole,
And took again the shape that he had lost,
Than, with his long-tail'd demons black as coal,
That whiz to serve him from hell's ev'ry coast,
Consulting in his study, soon he learn'd
Who prompted CHARLES to wreak the vengeance justly
earn'd.

LXVII.

Then churn'd the sorcerer's mouth the surly foam ;
He clench'd his fist, and swore by Beelzebub,
He forthwith should o'er half the country roam,
Beating each thicket with his oaken club,
To find out dapper intermeddling Tom
In his inhabited and secret shrub,
And heel him forth reluctant to the day,
And for his pranks chastise upon his breech, the fay.

LXVIII.

His hat he put upon his craft-cramm'd head ;
He grip'd his hugy gnarl'd staff in hand,
And down his study-stair, with sounding tread,
Came spitting smoke like newly lighted brand ;
Forth from the gate he in a hurry sped,
To beat the total bushes of the land,
Cursing at every step the harmless breed
Of elfs, that aid the wrong'd in grievous time of need,

.LXIX.

Need it be told? Alas ! too soon he found
The bush where with my dame, I sleeping lay ;
Too soon his cudgel, thrashing round and round,
Graz'd our slim bodies, in its dangerous play ;
And, had not Oberon sav'd us both from wound,
Our brains had fairly been dashed out that day :
We woke—we shriek'd—his rugged hand he stretch'd,
And from our leafy bed us by the heels he fetch'd.

LXX.

His long-nail'd hairy fingers, grasping tight
Our waists, uprear'd us to his bearded chin,
And held us there in melancholy plight,
Wriggling our innocent frail members thin ;
He spat upon our faces with despite,
Glooming his phiz into a joyful grin ;
Then, lowering down, he plung'd us ere we wot,
Each in a sep'rate pouch of his great clumsy coat.

LXXI.

There lay we button'd in, and closely pent
In a dark dungeon of detested cloth,
As, tracing back his steps, he homeward went,
And to his chamber bore us dangling both :
He drew us forth, the wicked churl, intent
On base revenge, malevolent and wrath,
And with unseemly usage treated each,
And slapp'd with scurvy palm my little harmless breech.

LXXII.

Then did he in his wickedness begin
To practise his detestable device ;
He took a paltry pepper-box of tin,
And, hoisting up my consort in a trice,
He push'd her weeping ladyship within,
Clean through the lid amid the spungent spice
(For fairy shapes can be contracted so
As through a needle's eye right easily to go).

LXXIII.

He push'd her, shrieking, down into the cell,
With cruel taunt and mocking devilish,
And mutter'd o'er her a confining spell
Of hell's abhorr'd and uncouth gibberish :—
*' Lie there, Dame Puck !' he cried, ' and bed thee well
In the snug durance of thy penal dish ;
There be a tenant till the day shall come
Ordain'd t'enfranchise thee from thy ignoble tomb !'*

LXXIV.

A sorry mustard-pot then took the Knight,
And, 'tween his fingers lifting me sublime,
He push'd and plung'd me, yelling with affright,
Amid the mustard's yellow sloughy slime ;
And, *' Lie thou there,'* he cried, *' thou meddling sprite,
And do the proper penance for thy crime ;
There be a tenant till the day shall come
Ordain'd t'enfranchise thee from thy ignoble tomb !'*

LXXV.

*Nor meet Tom Puck and Madam Puck agen,
Until the fairest maid of Scottish land
Shall to the supplest of all Scotland's men,
Charm'd by his jumping, give her bed and hand.'*
This said, he mumbled o'er me in my den
His damnèd spell, too hard to understand,
Of virtue to impound, and cage me there,
Ev'n till the day foredoom'd to let me loose to air.

LXXVI.

And further, he, to sunder us the more,
And interpose large space between us twain,
To Melrose Abbey journeying, with him bore
The spicy jail, where lay my spouse in pain,
And gave it to the monks, skill'd deep in lore,
That in their charge it might for years remain,
To grace the abbey-table, and supply
Their kail on feasting-days with pepper hot and dry.

LXXVII.

And there, methinks, for ages it has been ;
Till, as roll'd onward Time's fulfilling round,
By the wise care of our good fairy-queen,
To ROB THE RANTER'S house the way it found,
Where, from her box upstarting to his eyne
(The spell that moment lost its power t' impound),
My wife bade Scotland's supplest man prepare,
All for her weal and his, to jump at ANSTER FAIR.

LXXVIII.

For me—when first that stern felonious Knight,
Had dungeon'd me in penal-pot so fast,
My jail he did commit that very night
To Pittenweem's fat monks of belly vast,
That from its small profundity they might
Supply with mustard every rich repast,
And in the abbey-pantry guard the cell,
Where I, alas ! was doom'd for many an age to dwell.

LXXIX.

And there I dwelt in dolesome house of clay,
Far sunder'd from my wife in sad divorce,
Till onward drew the freedom-giving day,
Fix'd and appointed in Time's fated course,
When Oberon, the silver-scepter'd fay,
That rules his phantom-tribes with gentle force,
My mustard-pot by secret means convey'd
To MAGGIE'S house—the house of Scotland's fairest
maid.

LXXX.

Here, as one night upon her supper-board,
Imbogg'd amid my biting mire I lay,
My king a moment broke the spell, abhorr'd,
That kept me pent and pester'd night and day :
I rose, I loos'd my tongue to mortal word,
Commanding her to publish, sans delay,
The merry games effectual to decide
What supplest-sinew'd Scot should gain her for his bride.

LXXXI.

Abroad the games were blown o'er Scottish ground,
And hurried thousands in to ANSTER FAIR :
The work is done—the supplest man is found ;
He sits the Bridegroom and the Landlord there ;
The fairest Maid of all the realm around
Sits yonder, star-like shining in her chair—
The happiest couple they of all beside :
God bless you richly both, fair Bridegroom and fair
Bride !

LXXXII.

Nor think, my wedded dears ! that you alone
By ANSTER'S gamesome FAIR are render'd blest ;
We, too, who have so long with mutual moan
In torment and divorcement liv'd distrest,
Meet now again (great thanks to Oberon !)
Re-wedded, re-possessing, re-possess'd,
A pair of happy fays conjoin'd for ever,
Whom, henceforth, wizard's hate shall have no might to
sever.

LXXXIII.

And now, O King ! forthwith we must away
To taste the sweets of new-found liberty,
To ride astraddle on the lunar ray
In airy gallop to the top of sky,
And lave our limber limbs, and plash and play
Amid the milk that dims the galaxy :
Farewell !—may joys be rain'd on each of you ;
Adieu, thou Bridegroom sweet ! thou bonny Bride,
adieu !”

LXXXIV.

This having said, he on his shiny hair
Did gracefully his silver hat replace,
And seizing by the hand his lady fair,
Awhile look'd smerking, winking, in her face ;
Then swift as spark from fire, or beam from star,
That unsubstantial, slim, frail, fairy-brace,
From table heaving off their phantasms small,
Sheer through the window flew of MAGGIE'S dining-hall.

LXXXV.

Sheer through the window fleetly flew the twain,
Mocking the eye that tried to follow them ;
Yet, strange to add ! nor wood nor glassy pane
Was injur'd, of the fay-pierc'd window-frame.
Amazement ran in every beating vein
Of Bride, and Groom, and King, and Lord, and
Dame,
As they beheld the coupled goblins fly
Through window-shut and glass, abroad into the sky.

LXXXVI.

Recover'd quickly of their short surprise,
They drew to table nearer each his chair :
"A bumper fill," the sportive Monarch cries,
"To Tom and Lady Puck, the elfin pair !"
Landlord and guest his brimming glass supplies
From bottle, with the dainty vine-blood rare ;
Clean to the dregs their glasses drink they all,
As "Tom and Mrs Puck !" sound echoing through the
hall.

LXXXVII.

Thus they the social happy minutes spend
In wine, and chat, and harmless revelry,
Till slow began the round moon to descend
Down the starr'd ladder of the western sky,
And Sleep, that toil-worn man's frail frame must mend,
His sponge's balsam wrung on human eye;
From table, then, withdrew to sleeping room,
Courtier, and King, and Dame, and Bride, and glad
Bridegroom.

The few foot-notes by the author are transferred from the text, and incorporated with the new notes. They are quoted, and marked, *Note to 1st Edition*.

NOTES TO CANTO FIRST.

Page I. Stanza i.

THE allusions in the first six lines are to Homer's Iliad, Virgil's Æneid, and Milton's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. The last two lines and Stanza ii. at once introduce the subject, and the heroine and hero of the poem. The tradition on which it is founded has been preserved in the following well known humorous Scottish Song, about the authorship of which our song and ballad editors vary in opinion; the preponderance being in favour of Francis Sempill of Beltrees in Renfrewshire, who wrote about the middle of the seventeenth century.

Wha wadna be in love
Wi' bonnie Maggie Lauder?
A piper met her gaun to Fife,
And speir'd what was't they ca'd her :—
Right scornfully she answer'd him,
Begone you hallanshaker !*
Jog on your gate, you bladderskate !†
My name is Maggie Lauder.

Maggie ! quo' he, and by my bags,
I'm fidgin' fain to see thee ;
Sit down by me, my bonnie bird,
In troth I winna steer thee ;
For I'm a piper to my trade,
My name is Rob the Ranter ;
The lasses loup as they were daft,
When I blaw up my chanter.

* *Hallanshaker*.—The *hallan* was the wattle partition in old cottages between the sitting apartment and the door, against the inner side of which stood the fire-place. To shake the hallan, to frighten those round the fire, was one of the pranks of old times, hence hallanshaker, now superseded by *harumscarum*, "A hair-brained worthless fellow."

† *Bladderskate*.—A form of Bletherskyte, applied to loose rambling talkers,—*blethers* being synonymous with *blarney*, and *skyte* with squirt."

Piper, quo' Meg, ha'e ye your bags,
 Or is your drone in order?
 If ye be Rob, I've heard of you,
 Live you upo' the border?
 The lasses a', baith far and near,
 Have heard o' Rob the Ranter;
 I'll shake my foot wi' richt guid will,
 Gif you'll blaw up your chanter.

Then to his bags he flew wi' speed,
 About, the drone he twisted;
 Meg up and wallop'd o'er the green,
 For brawly could she frisk it.
 Weel done! quo' he—play up! quo' she:
 Weel bobb'd! quo' Rob the Ranter;
 'Tis worth my while to play, indeed,
 When I hae sic a dancer!

Weel ha'e you play'd your part, quo' Meg,
 Your cheeks are like the crimson;
 There's nane in Scotland plays sae weel,
 Sin' we lost Habbie Simpson.*
 I've lived in Fife, baith maid and wife,
 These ten years and a quarter:
 Gin ye should come to Anster fair,
 Speir ye for Maggie Lauder.

It will be observed that the poet is indebted to the above song for little more than the names of his hero and heroine, and two inferences deducible from it he discards; for he makes his MAG a native of Fife, and unmarried, circumstances out of consistence with a residence as, "Maid and Wife" of only "ten years and a quarter."

Page 2. St. iii.

The harp-fingering Theban refers to Pindar, the greatest lyric poet of Greece, whose future eminence was said to have been foreshadowed in youth by a swarm of bees resting on his lips while asleep.

Page 2. St. v.

King Apollo, or Phœbus, as president of the choir of the Muses, is invoked as the giver of poetic inspiration. *The Chian rhapsodist*, refers to Homer, who is commonly reputed a native of Chios. The Greek divisions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are called *rhapsodes*.

* Habbie Simpson, a famous piper at Kilbarchan, Renfrewshire, whose "Memory is sacred" to ballad collectors.

Him of Rome who sings how Atalant; relates to Ovid's story of Atalanta, an Arcadian Princess celebrated for her beauty and swiftness. Being warned by the oracle of Delphi against marrying, she made it a condition of winning her hand that her suitors should outstrip her in running. Giving them the start, she followed carrying a dart, with which she slew them as she overtook them. After several had lost their lives in the attempt, Hippomenes, supplied by Venus with three golden apples of the Hesperides, defeated her, by dropping them as a temptation in her way, and so won her hand.

Page 4. St. ix.

The puny fair-chinn'd goblin.—The description of Puck given here, and at stanzas xxiv. to xxix., is a piece of admirable fancy painting, which none but the dullest imagination can fail to realise. As a counterpart to Puck, we give Shakespeare's portrait of Queen Mab.

"She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn by a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs;
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers;
The traces of the smallest spider's web;
The collars of the moonshine's wat'ry beams;
Her whip of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;
Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coachmakers."

ROMEO AND JULIET, Act i. Scene iv

Page 6. St. xvii.

The names given in this and four following stanzas are well known family names in the "East Neuk" of Fife. They are simply representative, and have no reference to particular individuals.

Page 7. St. xviii.

The Bailies' loft.—The Bailies, or Magistrates, of all Scotch Burghs had an official seat assigned them in the Parish church. It always occupied the most prominent position, and sometimes a loft or gallery to itself. In many cases the landed proprietors and the incorporated trades had their distinctive seats also.

Page 8. St. xxii.

Like Jove's wheeled stool that rolls on high.—Homer represents Vulcan, employed in forming tripods for the gods.

"Instinct with spirit, rolled
From place to place, around the blessed abodes
Self moved, obedient to the beck of gods.

POPE'S HOMER'S *Iliad* xviii. 442.

Page 8. St. xxiii.

N'er smelt a Phoenix nest so sweet.—This fabulous bird was said to be a native of Arabia, and at the end of 600 years, to lay an egg of myrrh, out of which came its only progeny, the sole representative of the species for the following 600 years.

Page 9. St. xxv.

Iris with her shuttle bold.—Minerva, the patron goddess of weaving, is represented by Homer as instructing the daughters of Pandarus in the art. Neither Homer nor Virgil refer to Iris in connection with the loom, but it would be too much to say that no ancient classic does.

"These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof."—MILTON'S *Comus*.

Page 9. St. xxvi.

The churlish spirit of the Cape, refers to an apparition described by CAMOENS as having appeared to Vasco de Gama, who first doubled the Cape of Good Hope. It is the subject of a celebrated picture by David Scott.

"*Tangle-tassl'd*, hung round with tangle (sea-weed) as with tassels. I observe tangle in Bailey's Dictionary, though not in Johnson's." *Note to 1st edition.*

"To sport with Amaryllis in the shade
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair."—MILTON'S *Lycidas*.

Page 12. St. xxxiv.

When d'er the Isle of May the sun.—The Isle of May is about 6 miles from Anstruther, from whence its rocky front forms a conspicuous object, in the direction of sunrise.

Page 12. St. xxxv.

Shall merry sports be held in Anster Loan. “Anster Loan must, in those days, have been of great extent, at present its limits are contracted almost to the highway.” *Note to 1st edition.*

Page 13. St. xxxvii.

Billyness, “Billowness.” The west headland of the bay of Anstruther, which in stormy weather, well deserves the name. *Innergelly woods* are in Kilrenny, a parish adjoining Anstruther.

Page 14. St. xxxix.

Had Midas heard a tune so exquisite.

Midas, an effeminate King of Phrygia, and a pupil of Orpheus. Being made judge in a musical contest between Pan and Apollo, he decided in favour of Pan; whereupon Apollo changed his ears into those of an ass.

Page 15. St. xlii.

Y-smoking aloes reek. Smoking of the perfume of this name, “censer like.”—See Sts. xxiii.-iv.

Page 18. St. liii.

The gossip Fame.—This is Virgil's well known description of the gossiping goddess spreading the scandals regarding Dido and Æneas.—See DRYDEN'S VIRGIL, *Æneis* iv. 252.

NOTES TO CANTO SECOND.

Page 21. St. i.

The poet of "The Quhair." James I. of Scotland.

The King's Quhair (quire or book) is a serious highly figurative poem, and treats of the royal lover's affection for the lady Jane Beaufort, niece of Henry iv. of England, who afterwards became his queen.

Pebbles to the Play, and *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, also attributed to James I., are more in the vein of *Anster Fair*.

Page 21. St. ii.

Nowhere is the beautiful mythological allegory with which the poet ushers in the Spring, more apt to be presented to the classic-loving imagination, than where he wrote it. His further treatment of the subject in stanzas iii., iv., and v. is one of the best examples in the language, of the power of genius, adapting classical images to purposes of local description.

Page 22. St. iii.

Old Kelly-law, the kindly nurse of Sheep.

A conical hill, the highest (800 feet) of a fine pastoral ridge that lies east and west, along the parish of Carnbee, and about three miles inland from Anstruther. The top of Kelly-law affords a fine prospect. The term *law* for a hill is mostly confined to the south of Scotland.

Page 22. St. iv.

Airdrie Woods, are finely situated on rising ground about two miles from the coast, in the parish of Crail.

Balcarras-craig, so rough, and hard, and dry.

"It has since been planted and is now covered with full grown trees, so that the above description does not apply to it." CONOLLY'S *Life of Tennant*.

Page 23. St. vi.

Vernal harr.—"The *harr* is the name given by the fishermen, to that gentle breeze which generally blows from the east, in a fine spring or summer afternoon."—*Note, 1st edition.*

Page 23. Sts. vii.-x.

The commercial intercourse of the east coast of Fife, with the Continent, dates as early as the ninth century, and flourished till the time of the Union. It largely partook of the contraband character, which of necessity bred a rough, and hardy class of seamen, whose general characteristics were in striking contrast with the peaceful poetic picture here drawn, see Wood's *East Neuk*, p. 38.

Page 24. St. xi.

Nor distant, now the day, &c.—"Anster Lintseed Market (as it is called) is on the 11th of April, or on one of the six days immediately succeeding."—*Note to 1st edition.*

Page 25. St. xiii.

Say Muse, who first, who last.—In imitation of the manner of Homer and Virgil, who reinvok the Muse in contemplation of some important event, or to raise our conception of the greatness of some favourite hero. This consideration heightens the mock heroic ludicrousness here intended. The placing of St. Andrews' Students in the van of the gathering host, marks the poet's partiality to his *Alma Mater*.

Page 25. St. xiv.

And o'er his silent rooms the Ghost of Wardlaw wept.

Henry Wardlaw, a native of Fife, was made bishop of St. Andrews by Benedict XIII. in 1404. In 1410 he founded the University of St. Andrews on the model of that of Paris, where he finished his education. He was noted for his classical learning, and was entrusted by the King, Robert III., with the education of prince James, afterwards James I. On James' return from his eighteen years' captivity, he and his queen were crowned by Wardlaw at Scone.

Page 26. St. xv.

Plato's Ladder.—"The student wishing to understand this ladder may consult Plato, Conviv. tom. iii. page 211 of Serrani's edition."—*Note to 1st edition.*

Page 27. St. xix.

Next from Denino's every house and hut. This stanza did not appear in the 1st edition of Anster Fair. It was introduced into the second, which was published in 1814, while the author was school-master of the parish of Dunino.

Page 27. St. xx.

Next from the well aired ancient town of Crail.

Crail is situated almost at the apex of the naze, nose, or ness of land called Fifeness, and is the oldest royal burgh in "the East Neuk," being accounted a place of some importance in the 9th century. David I. frequently resided there, and it possessed the largest and wealthiest church in Fife. It was in Crail that in 1559 John Knox began the attack upon the Church of Rome in Scotland, which ended in its complete overthrow. It was the chief seat of the herring trade, and where the Dutch are said to have learned the art of curing herring.

"A Crail-Capon is a dried haddock." *Note to 1st edition.*

Page 28. St. xxi.

King's barns, and hamlet clep'd of boars. The former is immediately north of Crail, and would seem to derive its name from royalty when the court resided there. Boarhills, the name of the latter, also points to a similar connection, when boar hunting was a royal sport. The earliest name of the district, including St. Andrews, was Muck Ross, which in Gaelic means the "Sows promontory."

Pages 25-40. Sts. xiii.-lviii.

The gathering from all parts of Scotland, is in keeping with the Homeric model, and represents the catalogue of the forces. Like its famous prototype it is true to the manner and local peculiarities of the varied peoples brought together

by a common impulse ; and, considering the place fairs held in the social economy of the times referred to, the picture may not be so exaggerated as appears to us of the present day.

Page 35. Sts., xlv-viii.

Rob the Ranter is here admirably delineated to suit the part he is made to play. Even his ass is invested with a history and characteristics which at once raise him in our estimation far beyond what we have been accustomed to regard his species.

"Levanter ; ship trading to and from the Levant, so called."—*Note to 1st edition.*

Page 38. Sts. li, iii.

They come the cream and flower of all the Scots, &c.

Edinburgh and her people have always been held in special estimation, at least by men of literary genius. The most recent instance of this regard, as well as the most complimentary, because incidental and indirect, is that of the late Charles Dickens. Writing to his friend Mr Ticknor of Boston, U.S., in 1869, he says, "My old likening of Boston to Edinburgh has been constantly revived within these last ten days. There is a remarkable similarity of *tone* between the two places. The audiences are curiously alike, except that the Edinburgh audience has a quicker sense of humour, and is a little more genial. No disparagement to Boston in this, because I consider an Edinburgh audience perfect."—*Atlantic Monthly*, Oct. 1871.

Page 38. St. liii.

The first four lines of this stanza, are a perfect picture, whose simple beauty is such as only genius could paint, and at first hand.

Page 39. St. liv.

Krakens, isles of fish of droll renown. A chimera of the Scandinavian seafaring imagination, whose rough back, when it basked on the surface, was by sailors taken for an island, their mistake being discovered only when, to avoid the heat of their fire, it carried its freight into "the depth of ocean."

Page 40. St. lviii.

"Anster house was destroyed to its foundation in 1811."
Note to 1st edition.

Page 41. St. lx.

The wines of good Sir John. The history of the Anstruther family in Fife, dates from the time of David I. The baronet who was contemporary with James V., was named John, indeed, John was the prevailing family name; so that the poet might be justified in using it representatively.

Page 42. St. lxv.

Enact the best of Davie Lindsay's plays.

Scott's "Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, Lord Lion King-at-arms." The mount, Sir David's birth-place, is near Cupar in Fife. In 1535 he produced before the King at the Castlehill of Cupar, "A satyre of the Three Estates," of which Scott says, "his play, coarse as it now seems, must have had a powerful effect on the people of his age." In this connection, it is amusing to learn from Melvill's Diary, date 1572, that on account of Calvin's marriage, a play got up for the occasion was enacted at St. Andrews before John Knox, in which Edinburgh Castle was besieged and taken, and the commander and one or two more "hangit in effigie."

Page 44. St. lxix.

Cellardyke, Pittenweem, Balhouffie, Kilrennymill, are in the immediate neighbourhood of Anstruther, and mark the length and breadth of the space occupied by the fair.

Page 44. St. lxxi.

The Devil's painted books. Playing cards are popularly so called in Scotland.

"Whyles o'er the wee bit cup and plaitie
They sip the scandal potion pretty
Or lee lang nights wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the *Devil's pictured beuks.*

BURNS' *Twa Dogs.*

Tod and Lambs: Anglicè, Fox and Lambs, is a game played on a board called a Tod-brod with wooden pins, and seems peculiar to Fife.

NOTES TO CANTO THIRD.

Page 46. Sts. i.-vi.

The classic beauty of these five stanzas, affords another example of the author's rare gift of following the Muse of Greece with the easy natural gait of one "to the manner born."

Page 50. Sts. xii.-xxiii.

The heroine of the poem is drawn in these stanzas with a dignified propriety and profusion of poetical imagery, which, but for a touch here and there, makes us forget the serio-comic, in the really beautiful description. This art, of every now and then insensibly putting us off our guard, shows the author's power over the imagination, and greatly enhances our enjoyment of the poem.

Page 52. St. xviii.

The flimsy Coan vest. The 1st edition has *Chian Vest*. The light transparent dresses known as *Coan Vests* were a manufacture of the island of Cos, not Chios.

Page 52. St. xx.

Samiramis. The most famous heroine of ancient times, whose exploits were the wonder of after ages. She ruled over Nineveh and Babylon, of which latter she built the famous walls. She was no less celebrated for her surpassing beauty than for the greatness of her enterprise. See BYRON'S *Sardanapalus*, Act I.

Page 54. St. xxv.

As if men piped on earth, &c.

"And such a yell was there
As if men fought upon the earth
And fends in upper air."

SCOTT'S *Marmion*,—Note to 1st edition.

.Page 55. St. xxix.

Daphne was the daughter of an Arcadian river-god. She was extremely beautiful, and was beloved by Apollo, who, however, she did not love in return. He pursued her, and, as she was on the point of being overtaken, she prayed for aid, and was changed into a laurel, which, in consequence, is the favourite tree of Apollo.

Page 58. Sts. xxxvii.-xl.

This speech by the King is in admirable keeping with the free and easy character attributed to him when mingling in the amusements of the people, and is such an off-hand impromptu as just suited the occasion.

Page 59. Sts. xli.-lix.

The Ass-race, from the start to the finish, is described with great spirit, and justifies the jocular egotism of the new stanza with which the author introduced the fourth Canto of the last edition. It has been thought best in this edition to restore the original stanza. The new stanza is given here, and the others are where they were up to the 4th edition inclusive.

There are who say (the devil pinch them for it !)
That I am but a silly poetaster,
A trencher-licker in Apollo's court,
A sorry boy, an arrant paper-waster ;
The louts ! I'll make them mend their bad report.
Or on their mouths will clap a pitchy plaster ;
Ye blockheads, read my ass-race, and avow it,
That I'm Homeric stuff—ay, every inch a poet.

It has also been decided to delete from the text two stanzas which the editor thinks are, now at least, apt to produce feelings which the author never intended to excite. They are no way necessary to the completeness of the description, and are inferior in every sense. As the objection to them is only on the score of taste, they are given here under their original numbers, that readers may judge for themselves as to the propriety of excluding them from the text :

LV.

"And, to augment their sorrow and their shame,
 A hail abhorr'd, of nauseous rotten eggs,
 In rascal volleys from the rabble came
 Opprobrious, on their bellies, heads and legs,
 Smearing with slime that ill their clothes became,
 Whereby they stunk like wash polluted pigs,
 For in each sputt'ring shell a juice was found,
 Foul as the dribbling pus of Philoctetes' wound."

LXI.

"But, unapplauded, and in piteous case,
 The laggards on their vanquish'd asses slow,
 Shame-stung, with scurvy length of rueful face,
 Ride sneaking off to save them further woe ;
 For, cramm'd with slime and stench and vile disgrace,
 Th' abominable shells fly moe and moe,
 Till slink the men amid the press of folk,
 Secure from shame, and slime, and egg's unwholesome yolk."

NOTES TO CANTO FOURTH.

Page 66. St. i.

Maenad-like ; like the Bacchantes or worshippers of Bacchus ; from *mainonai* "to be mad," whence mania.

Page 72. St. xx.

The simile here used to describe the bag-racers, or jumpers, is the most natural that could be selected. Those who have seen both phenomena need not be assured of this, those who have not, may take the poet's word for it.

Page 74. St. xxiv.

The fabled Giant under Etna lies.

"Encelades, they say, transfixed by Jove
 With blasted limbs came tumbling from above,
 And where he fell, the avenging father drew
 This flaming hill, and on his body threw :
 As often as he turns his weary sides,
 He shakes the solid isle, and smoke the heavens hides."

DRYDEN'S VIRGIL *Æneis* iii., 775.

Page 76. St. xxxii.

By 'r laking. This may mean "by our wager," laik, aiking, being stakes at play.

Page 77. St. xxxiv.

*He, boy, that marches in such clumsy state
Is old Edina's child, a waggish Advocate.*

The Edinburgh bar has had a reputation for waggery. The late Lord Brougham, when a "junior," played some wilder, though not more comical pranks than that of the text. The expedient by which the race is maintained against Rob, is so palpably ludicrous, that we hardly approve of the "junior" loosing his case, under threat of a shower of rotten eggs.

Page 83. Sts. liii.-v.

The rivalry and jealousy of the competing pipers, their piping, and the disposition and piping of Rob, at stanzas lxxi., lxxiv., are drawn with minute faithfulness, and evince the possession of great exactness of observation and niceness of descriptive powers.

Page 89. St. lxix.

Ulysses got from him who ruled the Æolian shore.

Hippotades King of Æolia, on Ulysses leaving the island, where he had been hospitably entertained, among other gifts:—

"The adverse winds in leathern bags he braced,
Compressed their force, and locked each struggling blast:
For him, the mighty sire of gods assigned
The tempest's lord, the tyrant of the wind."

POPE'S HOMER'S *Odyssey* x. 19.

Page 92. St. lxxviii.

As when a sunbeam. We have no recollection of having seen this beautiful simile before. It is so natural and so likely to have been observed, that we wonder if it has escaped previous use.

Page 93. St. lxxxii.

And cripples, &c. The author would seem here, as well as at page 31, st. xxx., to have his own case in view, no doubt considering it unfair, when describing the peculiarities of others, to pass over his own, which he wisely never regarded with morbid fretfulness.

Page 94. St. lxxxvi.

Largo-law is a beautiful cone-shaped hill over 900 feet high, and green to the summit. It is situated a short distance inland from the beautiful classic bay of Largo, and about six miles westward from Anstruther, and commands a splendid view of the Forth.

By sweet St John! St. John preserve, or protect us, was a familiar ejaculation during Catholic times in Scotland. It is so used in "*The King's Quhair*."

NOTES TO CANTO FIFTH.

Page 97. St. i.

Grim Beattie Laing. "The famous witch of Pittenweem; see *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*," *Note to 1st Edition*. The book here referred to being "scarce," the reference, so far as it concerns the text, is here given in a compressed form.

Her husband, who was waiting the arrival of some wool from Leith, which he meant to dispose of at Auchtermuchty fair, expressed to her his fears of its being too late. She assuringly wished him to go to the fair, leaving her to look after the wool. On arriving at Auchtermuchty, he found she had been there in advance of him with two packs of wool, which she already disposed of. Coming home she had a black horse, and being late, in consequence of their being drinking, the man asked her what he would do with the horse. "Cast the bridle over his neck and ye'll soon be quit of him," she said. This was no sooner done than, as her husband thought, the horse flew with a great noise into the air.

Page 101. St. xiii.

Thirdpart-house. The name Thirdpart appears to have originated in a tripartite division of a larger estate—likely that of Balcomie, of which it afterwards formed a part. The first authentic notice there is of it, is in the reign of King Robert the Bruce, when the laird of Thirdpart—name unknown—was a suitor for the hand of the eldest daughter of “Anstruther of that Ilk,” and was refused; whereupon a tragic event ensued, in which Thirdpart was beheaded by Anstruther in his tower of Dreel.

Miss Susan Scott. The slight historic basis on which the poet founded the story of Miss Scott appears to be the fact that John Melville, Lord of Carnbee 1362-75 married Janet Scott of Balwearie, coupled with the fact that the old house of Thirdpart, now demolished, was long the family residence of the Scotts of Scotstarvet, a branch off the Buccleuch tree, not off that of Balwearie.

Page 102. St. xvii.

Michael Scott. The famous Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie, near Kirkcaldy, was one of the most learned men of Europe in the thirteenth century. Such was the prevailing ignorance and superstition regarding his learning, and the zeal with which he pursued it, that his name is popularly handed down to posterity in the character of a magician or wizard, whose supernatural powers were unbounded.

For further particulars regarding him see TYTLER's *Lives of Scottish Worthies*; vol. i., and SCOTT's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and notes.

Page 107. St. xxx.

Mad at the glaring of her scarlet frock.

“ Foiled, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,
Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast
And foes disabled in the brutal fray :
And now the Matadores around him play,
Shake the *red cloak* and poise the ready brand :
Once more, through all, he bursts his thundering way.”
Childe Harold, Canto i.

Page 116. St. lvii.

He from a Vial, Silver bright, &c.

Instances of fairy surgical skill are not numerous, yet there are some on record. One instance of their having supplied the white powder referred to in the text, is given in an extract from *Webster's displaying of supposed witchcraft* in the "Introduction To the Tale of Tamlane" in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

Page 119. St. lxvi.-lxx.

The story of Sir Michael's metamorphosis, which is here detailed with much skill, is traditional. The operator with the Wizard's Wand, the tradition asserts to have been the witch of Falshope near Selkirk.—See notes to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Page 120. St. lxxi.

A second miracle ensues, &c.

"It may here be not improper to remark that Weiland gives one of his Fairy Tales a catastrophe somewhat similar, if I recollect right, to the above."—*Note to 1st edition.*

NOTES TO CANTO SIXTH.

Page 133. St. xxxiv.

Old St. Rule.—St. Regulus, a Greek Monk, who, prompted by a vision, sailed from Achaia about A.D. 370, with the reliques of St. Andrew, and landed in that part of Fife which has since borne the name of Scotland's patron Saint.

Page 134. Sts. xxxviii.-xliii.

The portrait of Mrs Puck, like that of her husband, is drawn with much skill. The conception given of them is very much suited to the part which they are made to play in the evolution of the plots of the poem.

Page 140. St. liv.

As would a hen leap on a fire hot griddle,

This is a proverbial comparison in Scotland for any quick or hasty action. The griddle, or girdle, is a round metal plate on which oat-cakes are fired. After use it is set aside to cool, and hens, attracted by the crumbs which adhere to it, often exhibit the feat that gave rise to the proverb.

Page 142. St. lxii.

*For do not think that in us twain you spy
Two spirits of the perter wicked sort.*

Puck and his consort being in a state of temporary exile from Fairyland, it is quite in keeping with this circumstance that they make a profession of being well-disposed. Shakespeare, who is under no necessity of binding his Puck to keep the peace, makes him do all those things which is here protested against.

Page 147. St. lxxvi.

Their kail on feasting days. Feasting may have been the thing, but we suspect fasting was the name.

"Oh, the monks of Melrose made gude kale,
On Fridays when they fasted,
They neither wanted beef nor ale,
As long as their neighbours' lasted."—*Old Song.*

Page 148. St. lxxviii.

Pittenweems fat monks. The ruins of the Priory of Pittenweem are those of a large religious establishment. It was occupied as early as 1318 by Canons Regular of the order of St Augustine.

GLOSSARY.

Afore, 139, *before*.
 Agen, 81, *again*.
 Aidant, 143, *helpful*.
 Alchemy, 97, *metal trumpet*.

Baldric, 84, *belt, girdle*.
 Banning, 75, *curving*.
 Bannocks, 33, *oat-cakes*.
 Belike, 135, *as if*.
 Bemonstering, 73, *filling with monsters*.

Beshrew, 78, *ill befall*.
 Bigent, 25, *a first year's student*.
 Blobberlips, 9, *lips like blubber*.
 Boll, 102, *a Scotch measure equal to two-thirds of a sack*.
 Bonny, 2, *pretty*.
 Bonnilly, 139, *prettily*.
 Bousy, 128, *given to drinking*.
 Brainish, 4, *high-spirited, hot-headed*.

Brats, 32, *children contemptuously*.
 Brawn, 67, *the calf of the leg*.
 Brig, 35, *bridge*.
 Brogue, 33, *Highland shoe formerly made of untanned skin*.
 Burdenous, 126, *burdened*.
 Bursten, 76, *like to burst*.

Canaries, 46, *ships*.
 Canary, 93, *to dance*.
 Carle, 36, *yellow*.
 Carvels, 38, *light bonts*.
 Causey, 129, *Causeway*.
 Chapless, 118, *that does not warn by knocking*.
 Chanter, 35, *that tube of the bagpipe on which the tune is played*.
 Cleped, 28, *named*.
 Clutter, 126, *clatter*.

Crail-capon, 27, *a dried haddock*.
 Cracks, 28, *tells freely, merrily*.
 Croft, 44, *small farm adjoining a cottage*.
 Cuddling, 44, *squatting*.

Douse, 75, *soft plunge, or fall*.
 Drone, 5, *bass tube of a bagpipe*.
 Dykes, 16, *stone fences, or walls*.

Eke, 91, *also*.
 Elance, 51, *dart through*.
 Eurur, 49, *the east-wind*.
 Eyne, 10, *eyes*.

Featly, 92, *cleverly*.
 Fleered, 83, *gibed*.
 Fray, 72, *fright*.
 Fuddle, 130, *drinking bout, 41, to drink*.
 Fuddlers, 38, *drunkards, toppers*.

Gait, 78, *progress, pace*.
 Galliard, 91, *a merry dance*.
 Gawntressed, 130, *set on wooden frames*.

Gim, 28, *neat*.
 Gramercy, 74, *"grant mercy," an expression of wonder*.
 Grice, 68, *a young pig*.
 Griding, 131, *to cut with a grating noise*.

Haar, 23, *see note p. 159*.
 Heel, 144, *to take up by the heels*.
 Hugy, 144, *huge*.
 Hulks, 23, *for hulls*.
 Hunched, 58, *haunched, bent crooked*.

Jogging, 28, *jogging*.

- Kail, 129, *cabbage*, 147, *broth*.
 Kem, 91, *to combe*.
 Ken, 76, *know*.
 Knap, 99, *the top, or knob*.
 Krakens, 39, *see note p. 161*.
 Laird, 19, *landed proprietor*.
 Lass, 2, *young woman*.
 Lavolt, 92, *a dance with much high capering and turning*.
 Levanter, 37, *ship trading to the Levant*.
 Lights, 98, *lungs*.
 Loun, 25, *fellow*.
 Madding, 83, *furious*.
 Magstrand, 25, *student of more than one year's standing*.
 Maugre, 39, *notwithstanding*.
 Messenger-at-arms, 32, *a legal county officer in Scotland*.
 Mickle, 32, *much*.
 Muirs, 47, *moors*.
 Oddspittkins, 76, *an exclamation of wonder or excitement*.
 Ouphes, 3, *elves*.
 Pardi, 99, *verily*.
 Pariously, 95, *quickly, sprightly*.
 Peer, 136, *peep, come in sight*.
 Pibroch, 84, *tune for the bag-pipe*.
 Piddling, 132, *picking*.
 Poke, 68, *a bag*.
 Pother, 75, *a dust, tumult, ado*.
 Puking, 38, *vomiting*.
 Pursy, 52, *fat, short-winded*.
 Queasy, 39, *squeamish*.
 Quiddits, Quillets, 79, *subtilities, sophistries, equivocations, tricks of speech*.
 Rack, 49, 62, *thin broken clouds like scattered seaweed*.
 Rede, 136, *counsel, warning*.
 Reek, 131, *steam, smoke*.
 Reeked, 9, *smoked*.
 Rigadoon, 96, *a brisk dance on the grass*.
 Rouse, 41, *drink*.
 Rungs, 60, *cudgels*.
 Sans, 148, *without*.
 'Sblood, 76, *an expression of excitement*.
 Scots mark, 19, *an old silver coin, value 13s. 4d. sterling*.
 Scroyls, 115, *worthless fellows*.
 Sheeny, 92, *shining, glistening*.
 Shent, 108, *injured*.
 Shoon, 130, *shoes*.
 Sith, 101, *since*.
 Skirred, 16, *scudded along*.
 Slowgaited, 35, *slow paced*.
 Smocks, 70, *overalls*.
 Snooded, 93, *having the hair bound up with a ribbon*.
 Souse, 76, *to fall plunging forward*.
 Sparkish, 103, *gay*.
 Squir, 72, *to start, or fly with a hurried skipping motion*.
 Stockishly, 90, *stolidly*.
 Swashing, 68, *swaggering, blustering*; here, *dashing* is perhaps what is meant.
 Swingeing, 58, *brandishing with a swing*.
 Tag, 58, *tassel*.
 Tetchy, 38, *touchy*.
 Tod, 44, *a fox*.
 Tricksy, 141, *nimble, brisk*.
 Trow, 75, *I fear, believe*.
 Tumbrils, 49, *two wheeled carts*.
 Twangling, 87, *emitting a nasal sound*.
 Twiddling, 84, *moving quickly and lightly*.
 Wassail, 41, *festival, carousal*.
 Wee, 14, *small, little*.
 Ween, 75, *think, fancy*.
 Whap, 75, *exclamation of surprise*.
 Whiffing, 84, *irregular puffing and hissing*.
 Whln, 22, *furze*.
 Wight, 6, *fellow*.
 Wince, 130, *kick*.
 Wise, 4, *manner, way*.
 Yare, 43, *nimble, yarely, 69, quickly*.
 Y-twang, 59, *for twang, a quick sharp nasal sound*.

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